

SERMONS,

DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL.

BY THE LATE REV. DAVID GRANT,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, OCHILTREE. *K*

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

A RECOMMENDATION,

BY THE REV. ANDREW HUNTER, D. D.

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY IN THE UNIVERSITY, AND ONE
OF THE MINISTERS OF EDINBURGH,

AND A

SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR:

AT THE END OF THE VOLUME IS ADDED,

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEATH,

BY THE REV. WILLIAM PEEBLES,

MINISTER AT NEWTON UPON AIR.

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DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL

BY THE LATE P. D. D. D. D.

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RECOMMENDATION.

IN consequence of the dying request of the worthy Author of these Sermons, I have read, with attention, most of his manuscript Discourses for the Pulpit, and have selected this Volume for Publication. I hope every attentive and pious Reader will join with me in thinking that it contains much excellent illustration of the most important Doctrines of our holy Religion, and the warmest Exhortations to the Love of our divine Redeemer, and to a Conversation becoming the Gospel. If these Discourses are conducive to the spiritual Interests of Mankind, the Design of the Author (who is now beyond the reach of applause and censure) and the ardent Wish of him who recommends them to the attention of the Public, shall be fully accomplished.

Edinburgh, }
June, 1793. }

ANDREW HUNTER.

ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR.

THE lives of most individuals seldom afford materials for an extended narration; yet we wish to collect, and preserve every fragment relative to those whose memory is dear to us, and who have been useful in advancing the interests of religion, and promoting the good of mankind. As the Author of the following Sermons was well known to many, it is hoped this short sketch of his life will not be unacceptable to the Public.

Mr. David Grant was born in the month of April, 1750, in the parish of Madderty, within the bounds of the Presbytery of Auchterarder, in the County of Perth. His parents were of respectable character. In his early youth he received a common education, without any view of his entering into the ministry. To the kindness and attention of friends he was afterwards indebted for a more liberal education. Having acquired a competent knowledge of the principles of the Latin language, he prosecuted his philosophical studies at St. Andrews, and about the year 1772 commenced a student in divinity in the university of Edinburgh. During the course of his theological studies, he was employed as one of the Teachers in Watson's Hospital. While he was in this station, he was licensed to preach the gospel

by the Presbytery of Edinburgh. Soon after, he published a Sermon preached on a General Fast, 1779, entitled, "The living Manners of the Times, and their Consequences, together with the Motives to Reformation;" which met with a favourable reception.

Having remained for some time in Edinburgh, he received a call from the dissenting Congregation in the Groat-market, Newcastle, which he accepted; and was ordained pastor of that meeting in the year 1781. In this place, he was an useful servant of Jesus Christ; and by many of that Congregation his memory will long be held dear. Soon after he was fixed in this charge, he published a Sermon, preached at the beginning of the year, 1782, on the necessity and advantages of religious consideration. This, and the Sermon preached on a General Fast, are republished in this volume, as they are not to be found, but in private hands. In the year 1783 he married Miss Mills, sister to Sir Thomas Mills at London, by whom he had an only son, who is still alive, and now an orphan. For not long after the birth of his child, he was visited with a fore affliction in the loss of his wife, who died in April 1785; a loss which sat heavy on his heart, and probably laid the foundation of those complaints which, in a few years, brought him to the grave, in the prime of life. About this time, he published a volume of Sermons, which was so acceptable that a second edition was soon found to be necessary. It was in some measure owing to the favourable reception this publication met

met with, that his friends have been induced to offer another volume of his Sermons to the Public; which they hope will be read with pleasure and advantage.

After labouring for some time at Newcastle, in the work of the ministry, he was settled at Etterick in May, 1786, and on the 14 of December, the same year, was translated to Ochiltree in the County of Air, to which he was called by the unanimous voice of that parish. Previous to his settlement at Ochiltree his health seemed to be rather on the decline; but he was able regularly to discharge his ministerial duties, till towards the end of the year 1790; when he was violently seized with asthmatic and dropical complaints, from which he never recovered. Relieved to the will of God, and in the blessed hope of a better world, he departed this life on the 16th of July 1791, in the 42d year of his age, and the 11th of his ministry; much and justly lamented by his friends, and by all who wish well to the interests of religion.

He was singularly upright in his intentions; animated in his address, and cheerful in conversation. He had an enlarged knowledge of mankind, which he improved for the great purpose of rendering his ministerial labours more useful. His piety was unaffected; and his mind seemed to be strongly impressed with an habitual sense of divine Providence in every occurrence of life. In his public discourses he possessed a warmth and vigour, which testified that the truths he spoke came from the heart. He was much beloved by
his

his parishioners, among whom he laboured with unwearied diligence; and if it had pleased God to have lengthened his life, he would have been an eminent mean, under the divine blessing, of turning many to righteousness, and of establishing and building them up in the faith of the gospel. The writer of this short memoir shall long remember the loss he sustained by his death; and, in narrating these particulars, cannot but drop a tear to the memory of a friend whom he loved and esteemed.

Among the Author's papers were found the manuscripts of the following Sermons, which, from their being bound together, and from what he expressed a little before his death, it is supposed he intended to have published. They were however left unfinished. The Editor has used the freedom of making a few necessary additions, and what alterations in sentences strict propriety required. In these circumstances, the Public will not expect that accuracy, which would have marked them, if they had been published during the Author's life time. The preceding Recommendation supersedes the necessity of saying any thing farther, than expressing an earnest wish, that they may be beneficial in promoting the interests of piety and morality. To make up the volume, the Sermon preached on the occasion of his death is subjoined, to which the reader is referred for a more enlarged account of his character.

Newton,
3d July, 1793. }

WILLIAM PEEBLES.

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SERMON I.

JOHN xix. 30.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

THE death of the Lord Jesus Christ, as mediator between God and man, is the most important event that ever happened in this lower world: it is no less interesting, from the circumstances that preceded it, from the beneficial changes it produced among mankind, and from the consequences with which it shall ever be attended. So important, so interesting did this event appear in the eyes of the apostle Paul, that he desired to know nothing, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel; he was fully instructed in all the learning of his time; and was master of all the wisdom of man—of all the vain philosophy of that age, which he pronounces after his conversion, to be foolishness with God. In what high estimation must he then have held the knowledge of Christ and him crucified. He preferred it to the most extensive and valuable acquisitions he had made. And how unpro-

table indeed are all kinds of knowledge—the knowledge of history, of art, and of nature—“if we know not God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; whom to know is life eternal!” The knowledge of the gospel, and the way of salvation through faith in the blood of Christ, is a subject in which we are most deeply concerned: but no part of that knowledge can arrest our attention, can engage our hearts, so powerfully, as the awful situation in which Jesus was placed, when he received the vinegar; when he said, “It is finished;” when he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost!

In discoursing on these words, I mean, by divine assistance, to shew what was finished when Jesus bowed his head, and gave up the ghost; concluding with an improvement of the subject.

I. His sufferings were finished, as an atonement for sin. These words, “It is finished,” closed the scene of his sorrows, “as smitten of God and afflicted; as making his soul an offering for sin.” His conflicts were now over; his agony of body, his anguish of soul were now ended.

From the manger to the cross, from the inn of Bethlem to Mount Calvary, his life was one continued scene of suffering and debasement. He no sooner makes his appearance on the stage of life, than he suffers rejection and poverty. There is no room for the heir of all things in the inn! This was the beginning of his sorrows; and the longer he lived, the cloud of affliction and misery gathered thicker and thicker around his sacred head, and marked him out as “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” When a child, we find him an object of resentment to Herod: he is exiled to Egypt, and doomed to live in obscurity and retirement. When he commenced his public ministry, he is assaulted by Satan in the wilderness, where he did eat nothing.

He

He was then labouring under the greatest distress of mind. He forgot the calls of nature, while he was deeply concerned about the eternal salvation of his people. Was not David in the most deplorable circumstances, when he forgot to eat bread? How great was the distress of Paul, when he fasted three days? This is the natural effect, when grief of soul and a burden of sorrow prey and sit heavy on the heart. Now Satan was permitted to fill the mind of Jesus with all the distress—to attack him with all the temptations that ever possibly could befall any man, while want and hunger enfeebled his bodily frame. Now his anguish was so great, his temptations so dreadful, the travail of his soul so bitter, that he did eat nothing until the hours of darkness passed over, and the Tempter left him.

Are men more kind, more humane, to the Saviour of the world? Oh no! “He came to his own, and his own received him not.” He is deserted by his kindred, traduced by the Jews, persecuted by the Scribes and Pharisees, by all the methods of which their wicked and malicious imaginations could suggest or invent. You know how he was betrayed by a bosom friend; how he was apprehended, arraigned, scourged, and condemned: but the scene of his sufferings is not finished. I stop not to mention, what restless nights, what sorrowful days he spent; what labours, what fatigues he underwent, before he entered the memorable garden. The circumstances which heightened the sufferings of his last moments, are striking and affecting indeed! He begins to tread the wine press alone; not in a corner, but in Jerusalem. *There* properly, his agonies overwhelmed him; there, all the billows and waves of divine justice went over him, as our suffering surety; there his soul travailed and was in pain. Concealment deadens the soul and the feelings of shame: But, in order that the sufferings of Jesus may receive the keenest edge, he is called to carry our griefs before the eyes of the multitude,

titude, and to bear our reproach and sorrows even in Jerusalem. Through those streets he had honoured with his presence—through those streets where he had taught his heavenly doctrines, he is obliged to carry his cross. In a city where he had performed his astonishing miracles; over which he had shed tears of sympathy; he is treated with mockery and derision. Is Jesus led as a lamb to the slaughter—as the vilest malefactor? No desert, no sequestered spot, as his sufferings increase, is destined for him: the eyes of multitudes must give sharpness and poignancy to all his afflictions.

Mark, likewise, the cruelty and ingratitude of his enemies. Miracles he might work; tears he might shed; salvation he might proclaim: but for these is returned every insult that could wound a feeling heart. When does the ungrateful mind of your fellow creature afflict you most? Is it not when you are called to witness proofs of his unkindness, just when you have heaped favours, undeserved favours on his head? Was not this the case with the compassionate Redeemer of men? Scarce an hour passed over his head without stretching forth his hands to do them good! No day passed without seeing him devoted to their best interests. But in return, when the city is crowded; when they were called to keep the Passover; they are more intent to imbrue their hands in his innocent blood, than to kill the Paschal Lamb! If it be painful to suffer with mean and worthless characters; if it increase our grief to be put on a level with the most abandoned of mankind (as it certainly does), this malicious circumstance is not forgotten by his wicked enemies: "They crucify him between two thieves." To suffer with great and honourable characters, gives a dignity and grandeur to distress; it mitigates and softens the pain we are called to endure; imparting a noble elevation to the spirits, and a firm courage to the heart. But, Christian! you

you see this alleviating circumstance is denied your suffering Redeemer.

The text reminds us also of an important and essential part of his sufferings—the death which he endured. He was now finishing his obedience unto death; even the death of the cross—an accursed, painful, lingering and shameful death. The cross is laid on the ground; he is thrown backward upon it.—He, as the lamb of God about to offer himself for sin, lies there with heavenly meekness—His sacred hands are stretched out to receive the nails. Those hands, which had been laid on the children of distress to bless them, now stream with blood. Satan also, according to the first prophecy, must “bruise his heel.” His sacred feet are now fastened with nails, and tortured with excruciating pain. The cross is erected; his whole weight hangs by the most tender and feeling parts of the body; he appears naked and wounded to all. Now the storm, that had been gathering so long, bursts upon him from on high. Now the sword of Jehovah is awakened against the man that was his fellow. Now men directed all their malice and fury against him. Enemies on every hand surrounded him. Pain, and agonies in extreme, attended his departing moments: “This was the hour and power of “the prince of darkness.” Now he shewed all his hatred and malignity to the suffering Son of God. The ingenuity of men and devils is at work! The malefactors, crucified with him, are allowed to linger away without any additional marks of malice; but his hours of sorrow must be embittered with derision, must be sharpened with a mock inscription, with repeated insults! A noble, a godlike mind must have smarted indeed. Derision and insult who can brook? especially when received from the hands of an enemy. It is not enough, that those hands which support the pillars of heaven; that those feet which now trample on the powers of hell, are nailed to the cross: it is not enough that his whole body is covered

with stripes, with wounds, with blood. His every sense must be an opening to the entrance of sorrow. His eyes were to witness from the cross the ingratitude of the multitude, the cruelty of his enemies, the dejection of his friends, the tears of his mother—to see her heart “pierced through with many sorrows!” His ears were to hear the blasphemous language of raillery and reproach; of cruelty and malice. His sense of taste was to be gratified with gall and vinegar. That head, which is adored by the angelic world, whose nod heaven and earth obey, is tortured and disgraced with a crown of thorns. His hair that had been often wet with the dew of those nights he spent in prayer, is now wet with blood.

But all is not yet finished. We have seen the outside of his sufferings only; we have seen but the malicious arm of man exerted against him: he must be smitten of God and afflicted. “It pleased Jehovah to “bruise him and to put him to death,” as an atonement for sin: “God is not to spare his only begotten “Son, but to deliver him up unto the death for us “all.” But who can describe what the Saviour suffered, when the justice of God laid on him the chastisements of our peace; when he bore our sins, even the punishment of them, in his own body on the tree? Think, but for a moment, what punishment an infinite number of sins, committed by a multitude of sinners, which no man can number, against an infinite, holy, and good God, deserved; and you may form some faint notion of the mental sufferings of our Lord. As he voluntarily stood in the room of sinners as a surety, as a curse; he must suffer what they deserved to suffer. But we are expressly assured that *the wrath of God* abideth on every one that believeth not in *him* to the saving of the soul. If the guilt be transferred from the sinner, and laid on the head of Jesus, must not this awful part of the punishment—the wrath of God—be likewise transferred to the suffering surety. What the sinner ought to bear, he

he bore, when he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Think then on the thousand, ten thousand sins that appeared before his eyes, which his people had committed; think of the bitterness of death he was to taste for these. The wrath of Jehovah, which was due to the sinner, burned like a fire within him. His heart melted like wax; "his soul was exceeding sorrowful, unto death." None but himself can conceive what he felt, when he uttered that doleful cry: "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." It made heaven, and earth, and hell shake; and struck angels with eternal surprise and wonder. Now the justice of God was heaping curse upon curse, terror on terror—the weight of all our sins upon the head of our suffering substitute. These bowed down his soul; these made him to feel trouble, and anguish, and to give up the ghost. It was not the cross; it was not the nails alone; it was not the derision of men, or rage of devils, that made Jesus cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Many martyrs have embraced the stake; many have ascended the scaffold, who have discovered firmness and magnanimity in their last moments. Why then did the king of martyrs discover such symptoms of alarm? Why did the author, and giver of that strength which has supported thousands in the valley of the shadow of death, appear so dismayed and overwhelmed? His sufferings must, both in kind and degree, have been very different from those, which ever were, or could be sustained by the most illustrious martyrs. Hence those earnest prayers, strong cries and tears, which he offered up. Tears of pity he had often shed, tears of love he had dropped; but now tears of anguish run down from his eyes. Cries of mercy he had often offered up; But who, till the mournful catastrophe, ever heard his complaint? When the Son of God is alarmed; when the Son of God weeps; when the Son of God cries; what must be the agony he felt! Is there no visible sign of this dreadful

dreadful trouble of mind? Yes; his garments are rolled in blood. The grass of the fatal garden is bedewed and sanctified with a bloody sweat. It was not the ignominy of the cross, that thus covered his body with such visible marks of anguish; but a lively sense of the wrath of Jehovah; that was, from the heads of sinners, transferred to his own. He bore, at that moment, the sins of an elect world, in his own body, on the tree; the punishment due to the whole was inflicted upon him, at this awful trying hour, when he said, "It is finished;" when he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. Our apostacy consisted in our first representative and head forsaking God: God punishes this sin, by forsaking for a season the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven. The comforting and refreshing sense of the divine presence was withdrawn, while Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—"I wonder not at the cowardice of my disciples; they are men, timid and irresolute; the Jews are cruel and relentless; devils delight in malice; But why hast thou forsaken me? Hast thou refreshed and supported the faithful in their trials; why hast thou forsaken me?" Jehovah, sustaining the character of the great Lawgiver, withdrew his gracious smiles, and thus sharpened the Saviour's sufferings. God forsook him, in a way inconceivable by us, and thus frowned on sin in the sufferings of the Saviour of sinners. God forsook, and "spared not his own Son; that he might be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." At this eventful moment we need not marvel, if the earth trembled; the rocks rent; if the graves were opened; if the sun was darkened; and the veil of the temple divided from top to bottom. For, all that heaven required; all that earth and hell could do; all that Scribes, Pharisees, Judas, soldiers, Pilate, witnesses, thieves, executioners could do; was done, when Jesus said, "It is finished;" when he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

II. The

II. The prophecies respecting his death were now "finished." All things that were written of him by the prophets were accomplished. The descriptions of the Messiah, that he should be cut off, but not for himself, given us by the prophets, are minute and particular; are beautiful and striking. Whatever was foretold, was in every circumstance accomplished by Christ: and no action did he perform; no place, no situation in which he appeared, but what was the subject of particular prophecy. The prophets, commissioned by God, had, several ages before his appearance, marked out the track of humility, of poverty, and of sufferings, he was to pursue; and when the fulness of time arrived, he travelled over every part of that track of sorrow, "that all might be fulfilled." The predictions given us in the Old Testament, and the history of our Saviour in the New, when compared together, appear at once pleasing and marvellous. Suffice it to select a few, that are descriptive of circumstances, in which our Lord at this time was placed. His serious conflicts commenced in the garden, when he was apprehended by the ruffian band whom Judas conducted. This Jeremiah saw, when he prophesied: "The anointed of the Lord was taken in their nets." But how was he to be taken? He is to be sold by the covetous heart, and betrayed by the treacherous hand of a disciple! "He that eateth bread with me, is to lift up his heel against me." By his subtilty, the wretches, who engaged with him in his wicked scheme, are to receive thirty pieces of silver, as the wages of iniquity. And what is to be done with this infamous price? These thirty pieces are to purchase a field. Zechariah, if he had been present with Judas and his treacherous band; if he had been privy to their secret consultation; if he had accompanied them to the garden; could not have given a more particular account, than he has done, in the 12. verse of his prophecy: "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued," and

"and gave them for the potter's field." When the secret machinations of his enemies were made public by the open attack in the garden, his disciples were struck with consternation, and filled with dismay. They forgot the cause of their master, and consulted their own safety by flight. Zechariah, by the same spirit of prophecy, beheld the cowardly desertion of his disciples: "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." But is the shepherd to remain unhurt? Is he to meet with no abuse, with no personal insult? "All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip; they shake the head, saying, he trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." These are the words of David in the 22d Psalm, who writes more like an evangelist than a prophet. Jesus is to be scourged; to be spit upon: he is to give his back to the smiters. "I hid not," saith Isaiah, "my face from shame and from spitting." Is so rude and disgraceful an action worthy of a particular prophecy? Yes; that the Saviour of men might be known by the extremes of meanness and of glory meeting in his character; and that he might be believed on in the world. Were there deep and serious deliberations among the rulers of the people to cut him off? Were their determinations cruel and bloody. David foresaw these, several hundred years before Pilate or his judgement-hall existed. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed." What was the result of their counsels? Is the Saviour to meet with mercy? He is to be put to death; because prophecy had said: "The Messiah shall be slain." But he might have been slain by a thousand instruments, and in a thousand ways. They might have stoned him; they might have sawn him asunder; they might have put him to death in secret. But one mode is particularly pointed out: "Like as Moses lifted up the serpent

"serpent in the wilderness; so shall the Son of Man be lifted up." But how is the Son of God to be lifted up? How is he to expire? He is to be extended, and nailed to the cursed tree; because the Psalmist had foretold: "They have pierced my hands and feet."

Is he to suffer alone, or in what company is he to die? He is to expire between two thieves. "With the wicked," saith Isaiah, "was he numbered." Where was he lifted up? Where was his hands and his feet pierced? Where did he receive the vinegar? Not in the streets of Jerusalem; not in the market-place. Why? Because prophecy had pointed out a different spot. He was to suffer without the gate: On Mount Moriah was the Lord to appear.

It is not enough, that the mode, the manner, the company, and the place, are mentioned; the raiment wherewith he is clothed, is not deemed unworthy of prophetic notice: "They divided my garments, and on my vesture cast lots."

When his conflicts were finished, when his breath departed, he hung a spectacle of woe, between heaven and earth, at the mercy of the Jews. But they who erected the cross; they who drove the nails; have not the courage to break a bone of the Saviour's body. The language of prophecy stood in the way, and it must be fulfilled: "Not a bone of him shall be broken," said the Psalmist. But is their fury wrecked? Is their malice spent? Is their cruelty at an end? No; the spear must be drawn; it must yet pierce his sacred side. Why is this needless, unavailing circumstance of cruelty permitted? The Saviour is already dead; Why then wound him with the spear? It was that the words of Zechariah might be fulfilled: "They shall look on him whom they have pierced." He was to be the exact antitype of the first Adam. Blood and water were to be taken from his side, by which he was to sanctify and purify a church unto himself; by which many sons and daughters were to

to be born unto him.——Thus, “when he received the vinegar,” all the prophecies respecting his death, were literally finished and accomplished.

III. “When he received the vinegar, and said, It is finished,” the types and institutions of Moses were finished: they became significant, and were fulfilled by him who is the end of the law for righteousness. It was in the dark volume of rites and of ceremonies, that the Jews read of better things to come. But when Jesus received the vinegar, he was about to put an end to that darkness which had for ages covered the altars, the shew bread, the mercy seat, the ark, and the holy of holies. From before the face of the Sun of Righteousness, who was about to arise with healing under his wings, these shadows were to flee away. Conjecture, doubtfulness, and uncertainty were no longer to hang over the dispensations of grace. These were to be removed, and the clear and unerring discoveries of heaven made known by the Son of God. His death, though surrounded with a temporary darkness, was to throw a light on the counsels of God, to illustrate the intentions of his wisdom and mercy, and fully to interpret the rites and institutions of Moses. Unintelligible would have been the institutions of Moses, unmeaning the priesthood of Aaron, had not Christ appeared in the end of the world, to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.

When God was manifested in the flesh, the Passover, the tabernacle, the washings, and purifications of the temple, the sprinklings and sacrifices received their final accomplishment. The time was now arrived, which Daniel saw in holy vision, when “the Messiah should confirm the covenant, and cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease;” when these should be all fulfilled in his death. When Jesus bowed his head and gave up the ghost, he gave meaning to the Paschal Lamb, which the believing Jews slew, as well

to commemorate past deliverances, as to cherish and keep alive their hopes of a coming Saviour, and a spiritual salvation. Many Passovers they had eaten: many lambs, morning and evening, had been offered, according to the appointment of God. They were designed to fix their faith on him, who was the Son of God, who is the hope and consolation of the whole people Israel.

By the death which Jesus was now suffering, these sacrifices, these types were fulfilled: they were all superseded; "For by the once offering of himself, once for all, he made an end of sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness." It was now, when Jesus said, "It is finished," that the high priest's conduct, recorded, Lev. xvi., in making expiation for the sins of the people, received its clear and full interpretation. Do you see Aaron laying his hands on the live goat? Do you see him making a sacrifice of the goat that was for a sin offering? Do you see him sprinkling the blood of this sacrifice on the mercy-seat, for the sins of the people? Cast your eyes to the cross of Christ, and see every part of this transaction accomplished in the death of Jesus. You may now lay your hands by faith on Christ, who is your sin offering, and confess your transgressions; for he is the great atonement for sin.

The blood of thousands of rams, if viewed as unconnected with the death of the Son of God, who is sacrificed for us, never did, and never could atone for one sin. In them we see him as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Do you behold Aaron in his priestly garments, confessing all the sins of the people? Do you see him, by this solemn act, transferring all their guilt, and laying it on the head of the scape-goat? Do you see this goat led into the wilderness never to return? And what was Jesus doing when he received the vinegar? Was he not bearing your sins, in his own body, on the tree? Was he not carrying them away into a land of forgetfulness,

where they shall never be found? Was he not expiring under the transferred punishment of all your guilt, "when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost?" The goat that was slain, strikingly prefigures a bleeding, a crucified Redeemer. The goat that was carried afar off, may represent a living and an ascending Saviour, departing from our world, carrying away all the guilt, as well as bearing the punishment of our transgressions.

I might illustrate many other types that were now accomplished by the death of Jesus, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost; but let these suffice as more immediately connected with the great event we are called this day to commemorate*. I proceed therefore to shew,

IV. That all the promises, made by a God of mercy to his church, respecting the appearance, sufferings, and death of the Messiah, were now "finished, when he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

Paul informs us, Rom. xv. 8. "That Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.—All the promises of God, in him, are yea, and in him, amen." The apostle assures us, Acts iii. 18. that the death of Jesus ought to be considered in this light: "Those things which God before had shewed, by the mouth of all the prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." Let us attend to some of these promises, which God had made to his church, and were now accomplished and confirmed by the death of Jesus.

Was he promised to his church as the seed of the woman who should bruise the head of the serpent? that is, who should defeat and finally overcome the subtilty and power of Satan. Do you not see the Son

of God, by his death, confirming this promise, by "destroying him that had the power of death, that is, "the devil?" Did God promise to send him as a prophet into the world, that he might be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel? In his death do you not see him bearing testimony to the truth; as a teacher come from God, sealing it with his blood; as the faithful and true witness? Did God promise to give him for a covenant; to make a new covenant with the house of Israel in his day? Did he promise that he would "be merciful "to their unrighteousness, and remember their sins "no more; that he would be their God, and they "should be his people?" By the death of Jesus do you not see all this fulfilled? When Jesus received the vinegar, "was he not redeeming you from the curse "of the law, being made a curse for you, that he "might reconcile you unto God by his cross?" Behold now that blood shed on the cross, "which "cleanseth from all sin." Hath God promised to give a new heart? Hath he promised to put his spirit within you? Hath he promised to pour out upon you a spirit of prayer and supplication? Hath he promised strength suited to every duty? Hath he promised to guide by his counsel while here, and afterwards to receive you into his glory? Hath he promised that those that be planted in the courts of God shall bring forth fruit in old age; that he will revive the spirit of the humble, and revive the heart of the contrite one? Behold Jesus on his cross, as the pledge of all these promises being accomplished to you. His finishing the work that was given him to do is the best, the surest charter you can plead, or bring to a mercy-seat. Jesus Christ suffered that the promises of salvation might be preached in his name among all nations. Well does an apostle reason: "He that "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up unto the death for us all, how will he not with him

"freely give us all things?" Look at Jesus receiving the vinegar; hear him saying, "It is finished;" and you behold him as the seed of Abraham, in whom all nations should be blessed—blessed with the exceeding great and precious promises of God.

SERMON II.

JOHN xix. 30.

*When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar,
he said, It is finished : and he bowed his head,
and gave up the ghost.*

THESE words record an event which shall be held in everlasting remembrance. Jesus, the Son of God, for our sakes, condescended to become man. "The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us." His life on earth was one continued track of affliction and sorrow; yet he persevered in his noble and generous design, till he could say with triumph on the cross, "It is finished:—For it has come him," even God the Father, "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings."

It was proposed to shew what was finished, when Jesus bowed his head and gave up the ghost. I. His sufferings were finished, as an atonement for sin. All the pains of his body, all the agonies of his soul, were now ended. II. The prophecies respecting his death were likewise finished. All things that were written

in the law, the prophets, and the Psalms, concerning him, now received their full accomplishment. III. When he received the vinegar, and said, "It is finished," all the types and institutions of Moses were finished. His death gave meaning and importance to all the rites and sacrifices that constituted the divine worship in former ages. All these were now finished. IV. All the promises of God, as the God of mercy and grace to his church, respecting the appearance, sufferings, and death of Jesus were now finished, when he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. These we endeavoured to illustrate in the preceding discourse: we now farther observe,

V. That the demands of the divine law were finished, the ruining effects of sin removed, and a firm foundation laid, of "great consolation" to every true believer, "when Jesus bowed his head and gave up the ghost."

The law had early pronounced "death to be the wages of sin." Mankind are considered by the Gospel, as guilty before God, as chargeable with transgression of the law, which is holy, just, and good. That punishment, in case of disobedience, they must bear; for to it, as offenders, are they obnoxious. It is not consistent, as appears from the gospel, with the truth and holiness of God; with the honour of his moral government, to pardon sin without the shedding of blood—without full reparation being made by an atoning sacrifice. It is enough to say that God *has not* done it, and therefore it cannot and could not be done. Men might indeed have been led to entertain thoughts injurious to the holy character of God; they might have taken the most ample encouragement to sin, if general and unconditional mercy had been published, and the sinner not directed to look to a bleeding Saviour, as a curse and sacrifice for sin—to his death as magnifying, *not mitigating*, the law and making it honourable. If the Lord were to mark iniquity, the sinner could

could not stand before him: He must submit to the sentence of death. But the wisdom of God sets on foot, and the mercy of God reveals, the only expedient by which he could shew himself *just and yet the justifier of the ungodly*. He determined to redeem and save sinners by the substitution of his Son in their room and stead. Here shines forth the grace and mercy of our God. "He sent his own Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem sinners from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them." Jesus Christ accordingly appeared in our nature. He voluntarily substituted himself in the room of sinners; that by his obedience to the divine law, by his sufferings and death, he might confer on them, instead of death, eternal life. "Truly the Son of Man goeth as it was determined," saith Christ himself, Luke xxii. 22.—determined by God, determined by himself, to be put to death as an atonement for sin. Often did he say, "I must work the work of him that sent me." That work was to suffer and die for sins not his own; to save us from our sins; to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; to display the evil of sin; to discover the hatred God bears to it; and to point out the ruin and issue of it to an impenitent and unbelieving world. "If Christ had not finished this work," says Flavel, "sin had quickly finished all our lives, comforts, and hopes. Without the finishing of this work, not a son or daughter of Adam could ever have seen the face of God." He who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.—He hath redeemed us to God, by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. You can now say with his apostle: "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." The law cannot now pronounce the sentence of death upon you. It cannot exact its demands both from the Saviour and the sinner. If he suffered the penalty, you that believe

believe in his name must go free; and "if the Son
 "make you free, you shall be free indeed." If your
 surety has paid your debt, the law of God, as a killing
 letter, will not, cannot in justice, demand it from you.
 May we not take up the language of the prophet and
 say: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith the
 "Lord; speak comfortably to Jerusalem, tell her that
 "her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is par-
 "doned." Do you see Jesus now bowing his head
 and giving up the Ghost? Do you by faith hear him
 saying, "It is finished?" He who seeth the son, and
 believeth on him, is delivered from all fears of con-
 demnation, and hath peace with God. He can now
 plead the Saviour's death in room of his own; he can
 now rely on the Saviour's obedience as the ground and
 title of his obtaining eternal life. With pardon he
 receives every needful blessing and grace which weak-
 ens the love of sin; and destroys its power in his heart;
 so that he shall at last be holy and without blemish.

Connected with this pardon is a sense of the
 warmest gratitude to his Saviour, that will constrain
 him to a cheerful and growing obedience; that will
 make him bring forth much fruit to the praise and
 glory of God. Connected with this pardon are the
 influences, directions, and teachings of the Holy Spi-
 rit, that will lead him on step by step to the highest
 attainment and comforts in the divine life. "For by
 "this one offering which the Saviour finished on the
 "cross, he will for ever perfect them that are sanctified."

VI. The power, subtilty, and opposition of Satan
 were now finished, and brought under perfect subjec-
 tion to the power of our Mediator, "when he bowed
 "his head and gave up the Ghost."

"It became the captain of our Salvation to be made
 "perfect through sufferings." A great part of this
 perfection, as Mediator, consists in power and domi-
 nion. He came into the world with the express in-
 tention to destroy the works of the devil. "Through
 "death

“ death he was to destroy him that had the power of death ; that is the devil.” When he said, “ It is finished,” he was spoiling principalities and powers, making a shew of them on his cross ; and, amidst death and darkness, was triumphing over them. Satan plotted his ruin and death, that he might defeat the end of his people’s salvation ; but he fell, like all his emissaries ever since, into the pit which he had digged. By the temporary death which he brought on the Son of God, he brought eternal ruin on all his malicious schemes against the salvation of sinners. “ When Jesus bowed his head and gave up the ghost, as Mediator, there was given unto him a name, above every name ; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth ; and every tongue confess that he is Christ the Lord.” By his death, he acquired a right to the keys of death and of hell. He now holds the whole infernal world in fetters which no power can break. Satan now is bound in chains which the great Redeemer alone can lengthen or shorten, as seemeth good unto him. All the power and malice of his infernal host are subordinate to the supreme dominion of Jesus. Satan may still go up and down the earth as a roaring lion ; he may still oppose the design of the Redeemer coming into the world ; but all his attacks serve only to advance the interests of his kingdom, and to magnify the power of his omnipotent arm. He now liveth as king for ever ; “ he laugheth” in heaven at the vain efforts of his enemies. He carries a rod of vengeance, with which he can dash them to pieces. See a beautiful description of this, Rev. xx. 1, 2, 3. “ And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he

"he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."

On account of his humiliation, all power resides in our Mediator; all authority is committed unto him in heaven and in earth. "He openeth, and no man shutteth; he shutteth and no man openeth." By this power he can now strengthen his people; he can guard his church; he can now govern the nations, and make heaven and earth bend to the purposes of his sovereign will. He can at once restrain the remainder of man's wrath, and bruise the serpent's head. It was his death, the finishing of his mediatorial work upon earth, that made hell tremble to its centre; that made the temples of darkness totter to their foundations; that shook the empire of iniquity, and will finally bring it to an end. It is his death, and the finishing of his work, that will put down all rule, and authority, and power that riseth up to oppose him;—"and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

Connected with his death, is his resurrection. As this was shortly to follow, it may be included in it. And it is by this "that we are begotten again to the lively hope of an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Death may conquer and triumph over his people for a season; but when Jesus finished his expiatory work by his death, and rose again for our justification, he assured us, that death, with all its effects, as the wages of sin, was to be swallowed up in victory. Because he died and liveth, we shall, though we die, live for ever more. If sin brought death and all its woes into our world, the death of Jesus hath brought in life and all its joyful blessings: "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all his believing seed shall be made alive." Having thus, by his death and resurrection brought life and immortality to light, we may now look upon

death

death as a conquered enemy—as swallowed up in victory.

I now proceed to shew what use we should make of this subject. And, in the first place, How should the sufferings of Christ melt our hearts into gratitude and love! All the cries he uttered, the tears he shed, the sweats, the alarms, and pangs which he endured, were for us. Did the Son of God suffer such agonies for our sins, and can we remain unaffected with the sight? Was the sun darkened, and shall not our countenances be covered with shame and confusion for the transgressions we have done? Did the veil of the temple, did the rocks rend; and shall our hearts remain unbroken with sin? Cast your eyes to the cross of Christ, there contemplate the Saviour “receiving the vinegar, bowing his head, and giving up the ghost;” and let your souls overflow with heavenly gratitude to that Redeemer who bore such a load of affliction on your account. This weight of two, under which he groaned, would have sunk an elect world to the lowest hell.

These anxious questions here occur, which each of you should now put to your hearts: Did Christ suffer all this for me? Have I faith in his blood? Do I now rely on these sufferings, on this death, as a good and solid ground of pardon and acceptance with an offended Jehovah? Sinner! if you have not this firm confidence; if you do not feel this love of Jesus shed abroad in your soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, remember you have a dreadful burden of misery to bear yourself. “If these things were done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry?” If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up unto death for us all; if you have no interest in him, will he spare you—will he suspend the effects of law and justice from bursting on your devoted head?

2. What a serious and affecting lecture does the cross of Christ read to the profane, the irreligious, and

and unbelieving soul! He said, "It is finished," yet the wicked will not allow him to rest; but crucify him afresh and put him to open shame. By their multiplied and continued transgressions they erect the cross, they drive the nails, they thrust the spear, they give him vinegar to drink. Perhaps you are fired with indignation at the cruelty of the Jews; but pause a little and reflect: "Art thou not a thoughtless sinner, acting the same bloody part as they did in crucifying afresh the Son of God?" When you blaspheme his name; when you can deliberately swear by him that liveth for ever and ever; when you oppress, and frown upon, and persecute his people; when your impure heart boils with lust; when you can riot and live like a fiend; are you not an open enemy to a dying Saviour? hadst thou stood at the foot of the cross, thou wouldst have insulted the Saviour and joined those who cried, "Crucify him, crucify him." Every sin you commit is a thorn, a nail, a spear to the Redeemer's side. When the drunkard spends his nights in rioting, chambering, and wantonness, he is presenting a potion of gall to the lips of the Saviour. When you condemn his gospel, and discover heart aversion to his salvation; Are not your feelings the same with the Sanhedrim? Are not you once more making Jesus carry many griefs and sorrows? While you declare your sin like Sodom, and glory in your shame, are you not spitting in your Saviour's face? Jesus still feels most tenderly the injuries done to his people, and the contempt poured on his gospel. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me." This voice, O sinner! should follow you through all the secret as well as open paths of iniquity. When entering on the commission of any sin; when engaged in any vain and criminal pursuit; it should sound like thunder in your ears: "Sinner, sinner, why by this deed, by that sin, persecutest thou me?"

g. Were the prophecies fulfilled when Jesus "bowed his head and gave up the ghost," hence we may

may learn the truth and faithfulness of God. We have seen that all these marked out the path of sorrow for our suffering Lord, and terminated in his death. Is not the faithfulness of God then like the great mountains that cannot be moved? The truth of God must remain unshaken, though sin, hell and death should combine to oppose it. If Jesus is humbled, if he becomes a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; if he receives the vinegar; if he bows his head and gives up the ghost; it is evidenced that God is faithfulness itself, and the purposes of his heart are, like himself, immutable; and that no prophecy or word that is gone out of his mouth shall fail. Why did not God spare his Son—his well beloved Son—in his last and most distressful moments? Why did not heaven scatter the storm that was gathering around the Saviour's head? The reason is obvious; it was to confirm our faith in the veracity of God, and to lead us to trust, with a steady confidence, in his faithful word. Has he said it, and shall he not do it? Has he spoken, and shall he not bring it to pass? Look, sinner! once more to the prophecies that mark out your doom. See them set in array before you as the armies of God. Reflect but a moment. If the faithfulness of God brought to pass all the sufferings of the great Redeemer, will this truth fail, in heaping upon your head the vengeance of eternal fire. Heaven and earth shall pass away; but one promise, one threatening shall in no wise pass away, till all be fulfilled. His word is firm and sure: as the pillars of his throne, it endureth for ever.

4. "When Jesus received the vinegar; when he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost;" did he ratify and confirm all the promises made to him, and by him to sinners of mankind? Then see, and daily look to Jesus as the light, the life, and comfort of your souls. By his death and sacrifice he has now a right to all the promises: "In him they are yea; and amen. But all are yours; for ye are Christ's,

"and Christ is God's." Whatever promise, Christian, meets your eye in the word of God, you have a right to it; you can now plead the death of Christ as an argument, with heaven, for its accomplishment. Your plea is good; it has been often urged before a mercy-seat, and never was, nor will be rejected. The advocate you have in the heavens is an intercessor, "whom the Father heareth always." O, how great the privilege, how blessed the comfort, to have an interest in all the promises of a merciful God! It is to have God for your portion; Christ for your Redeemer; the Holy Ghost for your comforter, light, and joy; and heaven for your everlasting inheritance. These are the only objects that can fill and satisfy the heart of man. But all these objects meet on the cross of Christ; there they beam with divine lustre, and dart a reviving light into the trembling, but believing soul.

You have seen Jesus, bowing his head and giving up the ghost, fulfilling the express condition: "Giving himself a sacrifice for sin," that the heirs of the promises might have "strong consolation." As sure as Christ died; as sure as he said, "It is finished;" so sure shall every promise in this book be to all his redeemed family. It is now an act of justice in God to accomplish them; and you need not doubt, that it is the delight of your Saviour's heart, in the most seasonable manner to bless you; to strengthen and to encourage you with the exceeding great and precious promises of his grace.

5. Were the types and institutions of Moses fulfilled by the death of Christ: hence we may learn, that we live under a clearer dispensation of grace. It had been for ages the language of God to men, by sacrifice, that "the wages of sin is death." There were all shadows of him that was to come, and "to taste death for every man." Our attention is now called off from ceremonial ordinances, to the unspeakable gift of God, suffering and bleeding as the great

great atonement for sin. Witnessing the death of Jesus as the end of the law; having him as the light of the world, we are called to the study of grace and of truth. How grateful to heaven should we be for this clear and comfortable dispensation of light. Truly the Sun of Righteousness hath arisen, and left no darkness on the face of Moses; no obscurity on the priesthood of Aaron. "Our eyes see, and our ears hear, what kings and great men of old desired to see and to hear, but did not."

Let us improve this particular, by frequently reminding ourselves, that to whom much is given, of them much will be required. It will aggravate our "condemnation," that light is come into the world, and we have "loved darkness rather than light; because our deeds are evil. Do you see Aaron and the house of Israel, in ancient times, looking to the sprinkling of blood in hopes of pardon? Do you hear their penitential confessions over the scape-goat? Do you see them transferring all their guilt on its head, when led into the wilderness? Do you see them, through these shadows, looking and longing for the death and sacrifice of Christ, as the consolation of Israel? Do you witness the incense of their morning and evening sacrifices? Do you see them purifying themselves with clean water, and waiting on the Lord; giving the glory due to his name; renewing their strength, as pilgrims and strangers on earth; expecting a better country, even an heavenly? Under the influence of this dark dispensation, do you see them delighting in the law of the Lord; adorning themselves with the beauty of holiness; living and dying in the faith of Christ and him crucified? Do you see all this, and much more than this; and tell me what a lesson it reads to you. If we receive so much instruction from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; if so much gratitude, faith, love, and obedience, distinguish the conduct of a David, of an Elijah, or an Elisha—what are we to expect from you, who are in full possession of the

better things to come; who have believed in Jesus to the saving of your souls; who are called to see the knowledge of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus? If these holy men brought forth so much fruit in their season, we look to you to bring forth more fruit to the glory of God.

6. Are the demands of the law fully answered by the death of Jesus; and could nothing short of his righteousness and sacrifice remove its awful curse from our heads? Hence we may learn, how we ought to reverence the law of God. It is holy, just, and good, and required a holy, just, and good sacrifice to fulfil its demands. "The death of Jesus magnifies indeed the law of God, and makes it honourable." He who can steadily view by faith, the sanction and curse of the law as displayed in the expiring moments of Christ, will never go from the foot of the cross with mean and low ideas of the law and government of God. Can he witness the agonies; can he hear the groans of the Son of God; can he see him bowing his head and giving up the ghost; and not have this truth engraven on his heart: "Heaven and earth may pass away, but one jot or title of the divine law shall in no wise pass away, till all be fulfilled." Although the wages of sin had been fully paid to our race; although generation after generation had perished before the anger and justice of God; although all had been doomed to live for ever under the frowns of God; although thousands of worlds had perished; yet all these would have given us fainter impressions of the purity, sanction, and curse of the law than the death of Jesus has done, in the awful circumstances before us. The death of Jesus tells us what God is; what the law is; what justice is; what sin is; what destruction is; and tells our guilty world, in characters written in blood!

7. Is Death and Satan conquered; hence we may look upon all his devices as vain and fruitless in the end.

end. By the death of Jesus, Satan is now bound in chains. He may prove a distressing foe to the Christian, but he never can triumph over him. If you knew the full extent of his malice against you; if you saw all—for some of them you do see—if you saw all the snares he is daily laying for you; you would then have a clearer view and more grateful sense of your Saviour's power, who giveth grace to help you in every time of need; who succoureth you when you are tempted. If you at any time feel your weakness, firmly look to that Redeemer who can give you the mastery and victory in all things. Satan cannot touch an hair of your head, if you place yourself under the covert of his Almighty wings. He is a fortress and a strong tower, into which the righteous run, and are safe. The strength of your Redeemer will bear you forward through all the surrounding allurements of time and of sense. "He will free your eyes from many tears, he will keep your feet from falling; and save your souls from death."

2. Did Christ finish, by his obedience and death, the solid ground of our pardon and acceptance with God: hence we may learn how careful we ought to be in not robbing Christ of his glory and honour. There is nothing finished in our most perfect duties. Our righteousness is as filthy rags when compared with the purity of the divine law, which must never stoop to the humours and weaknesses of men. Dare we then bring these as pleas of merit before God? It is Christ's finished righteousness and meritorious death that is the alone foundation of our hope before God. Hence we are said to be "complete in him," and to have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us who believe. Not a farthing of our debt is left to be discharged by us. There is no composition in this way with heaven. Jesus Christ is not half a Saviour. We must not, therefore, think of adding our penny, saith a pious writer, to Christ's

sum, as the price of our salvation. Is the precious blood of Christ not able to redeem us; and can our imperfect and defective obedience accomplish more than his, or make up its deficiency? Is this modest language on gospel principles? We must therefore ascribe the glory that is due unto his name—the glory of finishing and laying the sure foundation of our pardon and peace with God by his death alone. If his sacrifice be the price of salvation, what need of our additions, of our very defective services? Can a debt be, in justice, exacted both from the surety and the debtor? If Christ therefore hath finished our salvation, we are dead to the law, that we might be subject to the law of grace.

9. If Christ finished the work that was given him to do, and if you call yourselves his disciples; then you have abundance of work still left you to perform. You must leave all your justifying righteousness to Christ to do. This work he will not divide or share with the brightest angel around the throne of God, far less with you. But if you have this day, by faith contemplated an active, laborious Saviour, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of God, and to finish the work that was given him to do: you will not, you cannot long remain idle and careless livers before God.

Sensible that you have hitherto been unprofitable servants in the vineyard of God, as cumberers of the ground; you will soon discover a holy ingenuity in finding out, and doing work to honour and glorify your Redeemer. His love will not remain a dead, lifeless principle in your souls; it will lead you daily to express your thankfulness to him, and to live to his praise and glory. You will not work, it is true, with the daring and presumptuous confidence to justify your souls before God: this work is the work of Jesus only; but you will still so walk, run, wrestle, and fight, as to shew that your heart and life are all love

to Christ: "The love of Christ constraineth us."

The

The more you learn in the school of Christ, the more will you know why and for what reasons, grace and obedience are inseparably linked together. You will know, that the more you taste that your Redeemer is gracious, the more obedient will you become.

SERMON III.

ISAIAH XXV. 6.

And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

IT is remarkable that, under both the Old and New Testament, the blessings of salvation have been figured out to us under the notion of a feast. In the gospel by Matthew, our Lord represents the whole plan of Redemption, by the similitude of a marriage supper. In several of his discourses, he gives his hearers a view of spiritual truths, under the shadow of sensible things. In this way he conveyed divine knowledge into their minds, with more success than by any other medium which he employed: witness the many beautiful and striking parables which he spoke. All of them were designed both to engage and inform the heart. He clothes spiritual and divine truths in a dress borrowed from the objects of sense with which we are daily conversant. The spirit of God, in the words of the text, uses the same channel

channel to give us a clearer and more advantageous view of the blessings of his covenant.

In discoursing on these words I shall shew you, in what respects the blessings of salvation may be compared to a feast; and then conclude with an improvement.

I. The blessings of salvation may be compared to a feast; because they are all of an excellent and uncommon nature. A feast, you know, is always composed of the best and choicest things that can be procured. No cost, no pains are spared to furnish it out in the richest manner for the entertainment of those invited. The entertainer studies to have his articles of a rare and uncommon nature. On ordinary occasions, he may content himself with simple fare; but when he provides a feast, with which he means to entertain his select friends, he grudges not to purchase the best and most costly dainties. How beautifully does this circumstance figure out, or illustrate, the choice and uncommon blessings, that are prepared by the Father of mercies for believing souls in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper*. This solemn institution reminds us of the vast expence, and immense labour, bestowed before we could be saved. It serves to remind every intending communicant: That, the comforts he receives from Christ are the best and choicest comforts; the privileges, the best privileges; the blessings, the most costly and expensive. This solemn institution tells him, that he is "not re- deemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of the Son of God." Fix then, O communicant! for a little, your attention on the original dignity and glory of the divine person; on the adorable and mysterious union of both natures, that subsists in the character of our Redeemer;

* Preached on a Communion Sabbath.

Think

Think for a few moments, how he became man, man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; how he, who was rich, for our sakes became poor; how he led a life of suffering and distress; how he at last expired in the midst of ignominy, under the bitterest agonies, as a propitiation for sin. Think on the blessings he purchased for his people: think how, by his spotless obedience, he magnified the law, and made it honourable; how he atoned for our guilt; how he satisfied divine justice, and rendered God propitious and favourable to the returning sinner: how instead of vengeance from the throne of judgement, he brought from his seat of mercy, the fullest, the freest and most absolute pardon. Think of the embassy of prophets and apostles; of the mission of the Spirit; of the miraculous, and repeated interpositions of divine providence, in the gradual opening of the plan of our salvation, and the appearance of Christ himself in the character of a Saviour; and you will see what expence your reconciled God hath laid out, what pains he hath taken to provide for you spiritual blessings of the choicest and most costly nature. Well may the blessings of peace and pardon, joy in the Holy Ghost, and a well-grounded title to eternal life, be compared to the richest feast. And, "if there be any here
"hungering, and thirsting after righteousness, their
"souls shall be filled even as with marrow, and with
"fatness."

II. The blessings of salvation may be compared to a feast, because a rich variety of them is promised in the gospel.

In every feast prepared for friends, variety is studied as well as expence. Food of different kinds is dressed and served up to regale the friendly guests. How expressive is this of the rich variety of blessings which the gospel exhibits to our view! Hence the beauty and propriety of that invitation, addressed by Christ to his church: "Eat, O friends! drink, ye
"drink

drink abundantly, O beloved !” This invitation is founded on the idea that there is a rich variety of blessings prepared for his people. In the ninth chapter of the book of Proverbs, in order to illustrate this variety, Wisdom is represented as interesting sinners in each language as this: “ Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars; she hath killed her beasts” (not one, but many beasts); she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table: come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.” Mark the expression, She hath furnished her table.” A furnished table always supposes variety and plenty. But here you may wish to know what is the bread which Divine Wisdom hath provided for the food of sinners. If you look at the sixth chapter of John, verses 32, 33, 38—51. you will find it particularly described: “ My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven; for the bread of God is he, who cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread that cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if a man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” But what is the wine which divine Wisdom, or, as some justly think, the Son of God assures sinners he hath mingled for their use? Jesus interprets his own meaning in the Old Testament, by the language he uses in the New: when he saith, “ This cup (meaning the wine in it) is the New Testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many. Drink ye all of it.” Thus you see how one portion of scripture after another hath been united, to fix our attention once more on Christ as the great surety and purchaser of these blessings. It occurs

occurs then to ask, what variety of blessings hath he provided for his people?

1. When believing souls come to this gospel repast, they are feasted with the free and full pardon of their sins. Were ever any of you convinced what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God; were you ever filled with pious distress of soul on account of it? Did ever the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in you? were you ever burdened with a wounded spirit? and did you ever listen to the intimations of pardon from the mercy-seat of an offended God? Did ever the word, or spirit of God drop into your conscience the assurance of divine forgiveness? Say, how refreshing, how reviving to your hearts! You did never sit down to a feast, that afforded you half the comfort, half the gladness of heart as this! To-day every believing soul shall hear from the lips of his dear Redeemer, while seated at his table, these gracious words: "Son, daughter, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." And if you know the worth of your souls; the worth of divine pardon; nothing will be so welcome, so reviving to your breasts as the assurance: "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." This will appear the richest and choicest blessing, the sweetest cordial in the provisions of grace.

2. When believing souls come to this gospel repast, they are feasted with peace of conscience, another part of that variety here exhibited. The wine which is here mingled, we have already seen to be an emblem of the blood of Christ shed for the remission of sin. It is the blood of Jesus that cleanseth from all sin. It must, therefore, be the blood of Christ, apprehended and relied on by a lively faith, that can give peace of mind, and quietness, and assurance for ever. What is it that creates uneasiness in the breast of man? What is it that destroys his inward peace and robs him of tranquillity of soul? It is sin. Were we as free from sin as the angels, we should be
 happy

happy; guilt is the parent of misery; innocence is the parent of joy. But is there any thing that can make the mind of a guilty creature innocent in the sight of heaven? Is there any thing that can purge away his transgressions? Is there any thing that can give the sinner, convicted and trembling before a throne of justice, that peace of mind which passeth all understanding? Yes; "The blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin." Its virtue and efficacy, when apprehended and applied to the guilty mind by a strong and lively faith, free it from guilt and condemnation, and diffuse through the soul a ravishing sense of divine peace. The believer then knows the happy privilege and blessing which his Saviour bequeathed to him before he left the world: "Peace I leave you," said Jesus, "my peace I give unto you. Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God; ye believe also in me." Nothing but sin can trouble the mind of man: Jesus, by the pardon he bestows, removes all cause of fear and alarm. His blood speaketh better things than that of Abel, and fills the soul with divine composure and sincerity.

3. When believing souls come to this gospel repast, they are feasted with communion and fellowship with God. What is it that enhances the value of a feast prepared for friends? Is it not the communion and intercourse that take place? Is it not the free and friendly tokens of love and friendship that are exchanged? Take these from a feast, and you make it insipid indeed. It is at a feast when the heart is most open; when mutual assurances of friendship and regard are made. When believing souls come to this gospel repast, they are likewise feasted with communion and fellowship with God the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ, by one Spirit. It is here, when mutual assurances of love and regard are exchanged between the God of mercy and the humble sinner. I think I hear the divine Redeemer addressing himself in his word, to his real friends: "I will be your
E. God

“God, and ye shall be my people. I will betroth
 “you unto myself. I will uphold you by the right
 “hand of my righteousness. I will never leave you
 “nor forsake you. I am God all-sufficient: walk
 “before me, and be thou perfect.” On the other
 hand, I hear the disciple of Christ rejoicing in his
 God and Saviour, saying: “I will mention the lov-
 “ing-kindness of the Lord. He hath brought me
 “into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me
 “was love. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and
 “there is none in all the earth I desire besides thee.
 “This God is my God, and he shall be my guide
 “even unto death. Return, O my soul, into thy
 “quiet rest; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully
 “with me.”

4. When real Christians come to this gospel repast,
 they are feasted with a rich variety of promises, suited
 to their every state and condition. Is the believer
 called to the performance of duty: he has a promise
 of grace and assistance corresponding to every duty
 required. Man may, but God never sends any a
 warfare on their own charges. “He gives all his
 “people a new heart, and puts his spirit within them.
 “He takes away the stony heart, and he gives them
 “hearts of flesh. He puts his spirit within them,
 “and causes them to walk in his statutes and keep
 “his judgements.” Is the Christian prosperous? Is
 he afflicted? Is he attacked with temptations? Is he
 surrounded with the snares of the wicked one? Is he
 engaged in fighting the good fight of faith? Is he in
 life? Is he in death? Doth he walk in light or in
 darkness? Is the candle of the Lord shining upon
 him, or does the Almighty hide his face for a season,
 so that he is troubled? He hath a promise suited to his
 every state and condition. And they are not the
 promises of a man, like himself—no; nor the promises
 of an angel; but they are the promises of the faith-
 ful and unchangeable Jehovah.

5. When real Christians come to this gospel repast,
 they

they are feasted with a variety of graces. The fruits and graces of the Spirit are, "Peace, love, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." And where should this variety, this cluster of graces appear, if not at a communion table. If ever love should warm the heart; if ever joy should expand the soul; if ever peace should reign in the mind; if ever long-suffering should prevail in the breast of the Christian; if ever goodness should appear; if ever gentleness should adorn; if ever faith, meekness, and temperance should beautify; it should be when we are seated at this feast of love.

III. The blessings of salvation may be compared to a feast; because there is a fulness and sufficiency of them to supply all our wants. Would it not appear strange to see any one going away hungry or thirsty from a well furnished repast? Would it not appear still more strange to see any one dying for want at a feast? No less strange would it be to hear that any hungry soul who came to the gospel feast should go empty away: much more to hear of believing souls, who come to this repast, perishing in their sins. It is impossible for this to take place, where there is such plenty and variety. In Christ there is not only abundance, but a diffusive and all-sufficient goodness. As there is a fulness in breasts to give milk; as there is a sufficiency of water in the clouds to drop down showers; as there is a fulness of heat and light in the sun to send forth beams; so in Christ, who is the fountain of spiritual life, there is an overflowing fulness of all that is good to our souls. He is, as it were, the great ocean of life and of love, that issues forth in countless streams to refresh the city of God. He who, in the days of his flesh, could multiply bread to supply the wants of thousands, can now, with the same ease, nourish up millions to eternal life. In order to give us a proper idea of his fulness and all-sufficiency, when he giveth life, he is said, "to give it abundantly."

"ly;" when he giveth the water of life, it is *rivers*, not small streams, of *living water*, springing up in our souls unto everlasting life. "How great is thy goodness, O Lord! thou hast laid up for them that fear thee."

IV. When believing souls come to the gospel repast, they are feasted with tokens of divine friendship and love. An invitation to a feast is always an evidence of friendship and love. It is then friendly correspondence and intercourse are maintained, and the best feelings of the heart exercised and expanded. Is not an invitation to partake of the gospel feast, the best and most comfortable assurance that God is our friend; that he is in a state of reconciliation and peace with us? No such invitation should have been given; no such ordinance should have been instituted, had not our God entertained the most merciful designs of love to us. When any of you are invited to a feast, are you not fully persuaded in your own minds, of the affection and regard the inviter bears to you. When you approach the Lord's supper; when you meditate on that hour in which Jesus was delivered up to the death for us all; what is the inference you make in your own minds? "Is not God my sincere friend, and reconciled father, in Christ Jesus? Will he not with him freely give me all things? Now I know," may every sincere communicant say, "that thou lovest me, seeing thou hast not withheld thy love from me this day. As thou hast invited me to this feast; as thou hast prepared it for me to-day; I perceive thy grace, and rest assured of thy love to my soul."

V. The blessings of salvation may be compared to a feast; because they are all freely bestowed upon those who are invited. When a person invites us to partake of a feast, which he hath prepared as a mark of his friendship and esteem, he never thinks of pay-

ting us to any expence or trouble. Every thing is free of cost to the persons invited. In this respect the resemblance is striking; for what so free to us as the blessings of the Saviour's purchase. They cost him, indeed, much debasement and much humility. they cost him many sighs, many groans, many tears: they cost him much anguish of soul and distress of body; they cost him the shedding of his precious blood. But the sinner receives them all as the effect of free and sovereign grace. In order to shew how free they are, Jesus himself, who is the sum and substance of all the blessings of the gospel, is expressly styled: "*God's unspeakable gift.*" What so free as a gift? If you pay any thing for it, it ceases to deserve this name. Hence also we are assured, that, "*the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ.*" If you read Isaiah lv. 1, 2, 3. You will see how freely these blessings are bestowed: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not." In the last, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." After his ascension, the same language is addressed to the church, Rev. xxii. 17. "And the Spirit and the Bride say come; and let him that heareth, say come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take of the water of life." How is he to take it? "*Freely.*" Thus the language both of the Old and New Testament shews that the blessings of salvation are as free, as they are full, rich, and all-sufficient.

I shall now close this subject, with a very few inferences from what you have heard.

1. Hence we may learn the goodness and mercy of

God, in making such rich provision for his children and people. It is of the Lord's mercies that our bodies are sustained by the bounties of his providence. It is his hand that hath fed us all our life long unto this day. But how unspeakably great are his mercies, as they appear in the abundant provisions he hath made for our souls in the blessings of salvation! Here he satisfieth our souls, even as with marrow and with fatness. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." The Lord is their shepherd, they shall not want; they shall not want any thing that is necessary to comfort their hearts, and to promote their spiritual interests. He will lead them to the green pastures, and the still waters; and he will feed them with the choicest dainties.

2. Hence we may learn wherein the true happiness of a Christian consists. It is in the pardon which his God bestows; in the peace of conscience which he enjoys, through the peace-speaking blood of Jesus; in the communion and fellowship which takes place in a pardoned state; in tokens of divine friendship; and in a well grounded hope of eternal life. These are the never failing sources of high satisfaction to his soul. He leaves the miser and worldly minded man to search for happiness in the acquisition of riches that may soon perish: he leaves the sensualist to lose his time, his character, his strength, every solid comfort; to lose his soul in the pursuit of ruinous and criminal pleasures; He leaves the drunkard to drown his senses, and destroy his mental repose amidst his intoxicating hours; he leaves him to lay aside in his frenzy every mark or feature of a man; he leaves the careless and unconcerned to sleep through life, and never to awake till they awake in misery: his happiness is of a higher and nobler kind. He lives, he converses with his God. "The life that he leads, is a life of faith in the Son of God." He walks in "wisdom's ways, which are ways of pleasure,"
 "sanctified"

"sanctness, and all her paths are peace." He feels daily that "great peace have they who love the law of God, and nothing shall offend them." He lives in the fear of God, he dies in the faith and hope of the gospel.

3. Is there a fulness and all-sufficiency in the blessings of salvation? Then it becometh the children of God to be less anxious in pursuing after happiness among the creatures. Did we believe God that our happiness can only be in him and from him, what labour, and toil, and anxiety might we save ourselves. As a punishment of our unbelief, he allows us often to try the experiment; he allows us to lay our foundations deep and wide among the created enjoyments of time, in order to raise some fair, some fancied mansions of happiness. We plan, we work, we labour, and are ready to bless the doings of our own hands; when, lo! to convince us how much we have mistaken the true foundations of our bliss, all these mansions, which we have reared, vanish in a moment from our eyes: his providence lays them in the dust. It is then for the first time we begin to reason, to think, and to conclude, that our felicity must rest on a foundation which this world cannot give; it must be derived from a source which no created being can afford. Nothing but what is spiritual and eternal can satisfy a spirit that is immortal; and nothing short of the fulness and sufficiency that is in God can answer the hopes and desires of our souls. It is a hard task for a Christian to keep created enjoyments in the proper place God has put them. We are too apt to think that there is an all-sufficiency in them. Nothing can more effectually destroy their dominion over us, than frequently thinking on the fulness and sufficiency there is in the blessings of salvation. We must keep all sublunary enjoyments at a distance, and confine them to their proper station in the scale of our happiness. They may afford you pleasure; they may be your comforts; but if you have just

just views of the blessings of salvation, you will never make them your sufficiency, your highest portion. If the blessings of Christ's purchase really constituted your principal happiness, you would look upon all created enjoyments with indifference, even when they melted like ice under your feet, and departed: Your heart would daily run to God as its chief good.

4. Is this feast a token of divine friendship and love? Then, surely it becomes you to approach it with much kindness, and regard, in your hearts to the inviter. How unbecoming would it be in any to come to a feast of love with secret enmity in their minds? How much more unbecoming is it if any shall dare to approach his table without the love of Christ shed abroad in their souls? How dangerous to approach God with deceitful rebellious hearts! It were better for such, that they were ten thousand miles from a communion table. Think then seriously on the apostle's exhortation; let it have its due weight: "Let us, therefore keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

5. Are all the blessings of salvation freely bestowed? Let us accept them in the manner in which the giver thinks proper to convey them. He requires nothing at our hand to purchase them. Indeed we have nothing with which we can buy unless our hard hearts, our pride of mind, our evil passions and corrupt affections; and it is to be feared he will accept of no such price at our hands. Let us do him the honour he claims, of being a complete deliverer from sin and death. It is degrading to the Saviour to make him but *half* a Redeemer. We are willing to receive a feast *freely* from man; but we will and we must, because the pride of our heart prompts us to it, purchase if possible this spiritual feast. We may indeed allow our Saviour to do something, not near so much as he says he has done himself; but we must have

have the honour of doing a little ourselves, to make up the deficiency. He must bring a part of his obedience, and we must bring a part of ours, and heaven must be pleased with the bargain we make. It is in vain to tell some people that Christ hath already finished the work that was given him to do—that of saving sinners. It is in vain to tell them, that he said on the cross, “It is finished; that he bowed his head and gave up the Ghost.” It is in vain to tell them, that he is the “way, the truth and the life.” They know of more ways than one of going to heaven: They will not believe these solemn declarations of the Saviour. Their self-righteous spirits cannot brook to receive a pardon so free, so full and absolute without doing and working something for it. Alas! pardon would never have been heard in our world, had it depended on any thing we could do. How different the feelings, how different the expressions of those who have really tasted that the Lord is gracious! “Give ye the glory that is due unto his name. God forbid that I should glory in any thing save in the cross of Christ. I count all things but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; and desire to be found in him not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is of God; even the righteousness of God by faith. If ye seek to be justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace: For whosoever seeketh to be justified by the law, Christ is become of none effect to them. By grace are we saved, and that not of ourselves. It is the gift of God.” Salvation is freely given to the chief of sinners; let it then be as freely received.

S E R M O N I V.

I TIMOTHY i. 15.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief.

THE gospel is indeed a faithful saying! Its truth and credibility rest on the most solid foundation that can well be imagined. In order to perceive how faithful a saying the gospel is; I may begin with remarking, that moral evidence, or the testimony of others, is accounted sufficient to satisfy us in most occurrences of life that have happened in our days, or in former times. Thus we believe, without any hesitation, a variety of events that every day take place, but of which we ourselves have neither been eye nor ear witnesses. Thus we give the fullest credit to a multiplicity of facts in the history both of our own and of other nations. Examining the gospel by this rule, we shall find it a true and faithful revelation of the will of God.

The apostles of Christ were able and well qualified to judge, and could not be deceived about the things they relate. They had conversed with Jesus; they had

and lived much in his company; they had beheld the great and wonderful works he performed; they had witnessed his death, and seen his resurrection; they were as good judges of the truth of these facts as we are of the shining of the sun, or of our present existence. Besides this, the apostles were under no worldly temptations to impose upon themselves, or to misrepresent the truths of the gospel to others. They were called to undergo self-denial in a variety of forms; to sacrifice every thing that was dear to them; and to seal the testimony they gave to the truth of the gospel with their death. No selfish, no worldly, no mercenary design had they in view: they all unite, by what they suffered, in assuring us that the gospel is "*a faithful saying.*"

We may also remark, that the age in which the apostles lived, was distinguished by improvements in science, and by freedom of inquiry. Not like impostors who take advantage of the credulity of the vulgar, they preached the gospel to the most learned of their times, and challenged the rulers and chief priests of the Jewish nation to a strict and thorough investigation of the truths they delivered. The gospel was not published in a corner: Jesus himself taught openly; in secret he did nothing. The apostles, living in the midst of their enemies, preached Christ and him crucified, in the synagogues and temple. In such an age, and in such circumstances, is it possible to conceive that men would have ventured to declare doctrines of this nature, if the gospel were not "*a faithful saying?*" Look at the simplicity, the honesty and integrity of their lives and temper. They do not conceal the failings of one another; they draw no veil over their own personal imperfections; they tell you of their prejudices, and record instances of their unbelief. Never were men so honoured in working the most astonishing miracles; and yet never were men so humble. They boast not of themselves; but glory only in the Lord. In the cross
and

and in the grace of Christ, they ever rejoice. The miracles, which they wrought, also concurred in proving the gospel to be "*a faithful saying.*" It was not by the force of arms, or by worldly power, that the gospel spread its influence among the nations of the earth. It was by the force of truth, by the power and efficacy it had on the hearts and consciences of men. By the doctrines the apostles taught, and the miracles they wrought, they turned men from idolatry and impiety to the knowledge of Christ Jesus. By such signs and wonders they every where taught that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour of the world. May we not, therefore, infer that the gospel is "*a faithful saying?*"

In discoursing on these words, I shall endeavour, in the first place, to shew what we are to understand by Christ's coming into the world. In the second place, point out the great end of his coming. In the third place, shew how the salvation accomplished by Christ is worthy of our acceptance: and then make a practical use of these different views of the subject.

I. I Shall endeavour to shew what we are to understand, by Christ's coming into the world.

1. It implies that Jesus our Redeemer existed before he came into the world. This is evident from a variety of places in the scripture. In the prophecy of Micah, v. 2. we are informed, that "*His going forth were of old even from everlasting.*"—Before "*Abraham was,*" he himself said, "*I am.*" He was represented in the word of God, as the angel, Jehovah, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush as the Creator of the world; as the deliverer of Israel; as the lawgiver from Mount Sinai. All which events happened many ages before his incarnation. But his own prayer is a full proof of this: "*glorify me with that glory which I had with thee before the world was.*" To come into the world suppose

that he existed before he assumed our nature. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." What is the meaning of that expression: "Christ was manifested in the flesh?" 1 Tim. iii. 16. The manifestation, or discovery, of any thing, evidently implies its previous existence. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested." 1 John iii. 8. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." Hence we infer, that he must have existed with the Father; and being in the bosom of the Father, he must have sustained the high character, from eternal ages, of his only begotten and well-beloved Son. We may illustrate this truth from his own words, John xvi. 28. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world again: I leave the world and go to the Father."

2. When it is said that Christ came into the world, it implies his taking upon him our nature, being made flesh, and becoming bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, in full and perfect union with his divine nature. "He was made partaker of flesh and blood," says the apostle, Heb. ii. 14 "He took upon him the seed of Abraham, and the word was made flesh." All these expressions clearly prove, that the divine nature in which he existed, was now, in a marvellous and condescending manner, united to the human. The Son of God, still possessed of all the divine perfections, tabernacled and dwelt among us, partaking of the real faculties, properties, and affections of human nature, yet without the least sin or defect. This is what the apostle calls, "God, manifested in the flesh." It was every way agreeable to the infinite wisdom of God, that Satan should be conquered in that nature he had deceived; that sin should be punished with the death of the surety, in that nature which had transgressed; that the law of God should be honoured in that nature which had offended. For these purposes, "Christ

"made under the law, and God was manifested in the flesh." In this union, though Christ parted with nothing of his divine and essential glory, as the Son of God, yet this glory was veiled and obscured for a season, by his appearance in our weak and miserable nature. "He was without form or comeliness." While he tabernacled among men, he did not display the fulness of his majesty and glory; though in the form of God before his incarnation, he took upon him the form of a servant, till his great mediatorial work was accomplished. It is true, even in the deepest parts of his humiliation, some rays of his divine glory and dignity broke out: in his transfiguration on the Mount, he shone with heavenly splendour. In his searching the hearts; in his speaking to the consciences of his hearers; in his commanding all nature to obey him; he filled the multitude with wonder, and constrained his enemies sometimes to say: "Truly this is the Son of God."

3. When it is said that Christ came into the world, it imports his willingness to be the Saviour of sinners. Through the whole of Scripture, we are taught to consider that every thing Christ did, in the capacity of our Mediator, was the effect of his own free and voluntary choice. "Lo! I come; in the volume of thy book it is written of me: to do thy will I take delight.—No man taketh my life from me; but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." John x. 18. All these expressions mark the high independence of our Lord—the sovereign power he had over his own life and death; and they shew how free, cheerful, and voluntary his sacrifice was, as an atonement for sin. Indeed, we could have had no right, or claim to him as our Redeemer, unless he had made a free and generous offer of himself. Had he not consented to take our nature upon him; had he refused to stand forth as our surety; no compulsion, no right could have brought him from the bosom of the Father, or made him a man of sorrows, and acquainted

ed with grief. In the important mission he received, his own consent was included; in his humiliation, obedience and death, the voluntary assent of his heart was implied. Observe the expression, *He came* into the world. Coming is a voluntary motion. Our great Redeemer willingly came into the world to save sinners. Can you attend, O Christian! to the cheerful consent which Jesus gave to become your surety? Can you witness his condescension in giving himself for you? Can you read his submission as a servant—amidst claims sovereign and independent—to his Father's will, and not be deeply affected with the readiness your Lord discovered in saving you? A general, who will, of his own accord, come into the hottest part of the battle, the place of the greatest danger, in order to save his brave and heroic army; who will expose himself to perils which he might avoid; to death and an host of foes, which his high station calls him not to encounter; would he not be considered as a friend to his country indeed? Behold, Christians! when you are told that Jesus came into the world, he came of his own free and sovereign will; to meet misery in every shape; to encounter Satan, death, and hell; which he might have avoided: to expose himself to the curse of the law, and to make himself an offering for sin, which he might have declined! Say then, how warm a friend, how endeared a Saviour is he! Such a willing Saviour surely should make willing disciples!

I now proceed, in the second place, To shew the great end of Christ's coming into the world. "He came into the world to save sinners."

1. If there had been no sin in the human race, and no redemption from sin designed by Jehovah, there would have been no necessity for the appearance of Christ in our nature. The removal of guilt, the final destruction of sin, and the salvation of the sinner, were the leading designs of Christ's appearance in the

world. There are various expressions used in the word of God, descriptive of Christ; he is styled a Physician; a Saviour; a Mediator; a Ransom; a Surety; a Fountain; a Reconciler; a Shepherd. Why is he styled a Physician, if there be no disease in our nature, that stands in need of his healing virtue? If man, in his present fallen miserable circumstances, were on friendly terms with a holy God, what occasion would there be for a Mediator? Were we not living in a state of bondage to sin and Satan, what need of such a costly ransom as the Son of God, who gave himself for us? Why is he styled our surety, if we have contracted no debt; if divine justice have no demands from us; if we were pure and undefiled with sin, what need of looking to him as a fountain opened for sin and uncleanness? If we were able to guide ourselves so as never to stray, what need of such a shepherd? It is remarkable that the first name that was given to Jesus on earth leads to the great end of his coming into the world: "He shall be called *Jesus*, because he shall save his people from their sins." The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Mat. xx. 28. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John x. 18.

2. Whatever be the end to which a person directs all his actions and desires, it must be considered by him as of the greatest importance. Now, look to what end Christ directed all his gracious actions, and all his generous intentions. Do you see him born? He is born to be a Saviour, to bring pardon and peace to men. Do you hear him pray? What is the subject of his prayers? Is it not the salvation of sinners? Is it not that his disciples may be kept from the evils of the world, and at last enjoy eternal life? Do you see him suffering sorrow upon sorrow? He was wound-
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ed for our transgressions, he was bruised for our sins; he bore our griefs, he carried our sorrows. Do you see his face bedewed with tears? Do you see him covered with blood in the garden? Do you see him expiring on the cross, encountering the terrors of death, and afflicted with the hidings of his Father's countenance? All these actions and sufferings concur to tell us, in language that cannot be mistaken, what was the direct and leading end of Christ's coming into the world. His birth, his life, his death, all unite in assuring us that he was the price of our salvation; that he came to take away sin, and to destroy the works of Satan.

3. Do you ever read of the love of God, and how angels and saints magnify and extol it? But why do they thus magnify God? Why do they thus exalt his name together? The answer is obvious; Because God commends his love to us, that while we were sinners Christ died for us! "Herein is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." To be a propitiation for sin was a direct and leading end of Christ's coming into the world. It was such an end as never should be lost sight of by the faithful and true disciple of Jesus; who looks to him for eternal life. Jesus is indeed exhibited to us in the gospel as a pattern and example worthy of our imitation as his redeemed creatures. But almost in every place where Christ is proposed as an example of patience and resignation, he is at the same time pointed out as the great sacrifice and propitiation for our sins. "For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." 1 Peter ii. 21. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live to righteousness." v 24. But this end, we cannot call the principal, or leading design of his coming into the world: This could have been answered by the examples of prophets,

of apostles, and of holy martyrs. They are nearer to us, and bear a more striking resemblance to our weaknesses and infirmities: what is distinguished and excellent in their characters may, therefore, with the greater success be imitated. Hence James exhorts Christians "to take the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction; and of patience." But none of the prophets, apostles, or martyrs are ever said to be a ransom for us, to be crucified for us, to be a propitiation for sins. These expressions are exclusively confined to Christ; and serve to shew that his death was an high and leading design of his coming into the world. There must be something relative to Christ and the end of his coming into the world, which could not be done by others, nor was connected with the design of their appearance. What this is the scriptures plainly reveal. It was "to save sinners." It was to give them eternal life. Read John x. 28, 29, 30. and you will see Jesus speaks as never prophet durst speak; and points out an end of his coming into the world which no apostle was ever commissioned to fulfil. Jesus came into the world for another and higher end than merely to communicate the knowledge of salvation, or to be an example to his church: he came to give them eternal life, by being a propitiation for their sins. Paul might reveal the will of God, he might be an example to their flock, he might lay before them the truths of God, and open the treasures of divine wisdom: but Paul could not die for them as a propitiation for sin; Paul could not be crucified to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; Paul could not be the author of spiritual life, nor bestow eternal life on sinners.

4. We may remark also, that the confirmation of his doctrine was not a leading, but a subordinate end of Christ's coming into the world: and of dying on the cursed tree. The innocence of his life and the stupendous miracles he wrought were sufficient to answer

answer this purpose. One may venture to say, that his coming down from the cross, as desired, would have been as great a confirmation of his gospel, as his death; if his death had not been a necessary, essential and determined part of his gospel. We never call the apostles, Saviours; and yet we are assured that they, as well as Christ, confirmed "the word by signs following." We never expect salvation from them although they all bore witness to the truth, and the most of them sealed their testimony with their blood. They must for ever, by their own declarations, stand at an awful distance from the great Redeemer, who came to save sinners by being a propitiation for their sins. The high and leading end of Christ's coming into the world was "to save sinners." By making a perfect atonement to the law and justice of heaven. God had threatened to punish sin with death. He must be faithful to his threatening, to his holiness and justice. Without a violation done to the faithfulness of God as well as to his holiness, the sinner could not be pardoned without either suffering himself, or his surety enduring the death due to sin. How then shall the Father of mercies save the sinner, and yet punish the sins of guilty condemned criminals? How is the sinner to be restored to the divine favour; at the same time how is he to behold the marked detestation of God against his iniquity? How are the holiness of God and the dignity of the divine government to be asserted, and the fullest and freest mercy shewn to the redeemed soul? It required both the wisdom of God to contrive, and the power of God to accomplish a plan by which these questions might be properly answered. The free and rich grace of God shines forth in admitting, in the place of the sinner, the substitution of the Son of God. The grace of Christ shines forth in becoming our surety, in coming into the world to save sinners. The perfection of his atonement appears from the dignity and holiness of the divine sufferer. Death, the wages of sin,

is endured, the law of God honoured, sin punished, and the sinner saved. "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men." This appears to be the scriptural view of the leading end of Christ's coming into the world, Hence we are informed by the evangelical prophet: "The chastisement of our peace was upon him. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; He made his soul an offering for sin."

Such was the great and leading end to be accomplished by the coming of Christ into the world: it was "to save sinners." For this purpose he condescended to become man, to suffer and to die the painful and ignominious death of the cross. "He hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour. Herein indeed is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Let us with gratitude embrace Jesus as our surety, our redeemer, our propitiation. Deeply sensible of the sinfulness and depravity of our hearts, let us, by faith, look to Jesus, whose blood cleanseth from all sin; so that, being justified by faith in his atonement, we may have peace with God, and may rejoice in the hope of the purchased possession in glory. Resting on this solid foundation, which God hath laid in Zion, in the sufferings and death of his own Son, we will join the Psalmist: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord to save us;" or with the redeemed company unite in that elevated song of praise: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

SERMON V.

I TIMOTHY i. 15.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief.

IN our last discourse, we proposed, first, To shew what we are to understand by Christ's coming into the world; Secondly, To point out the great end of his coming; and thirdly, To shew how the salvation accomplished by Christ is worthy of all acceptance.

I have endeavoured to illustrate the two first of these heads of discourse. Christ's coming into the world implies that he existed as the Son of God, before he tabernacled among men. That in the fulness of time he took upon him our nature, becoming bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, in perfect union with the divine nature. His coming into the world also implies his willingness to be the Saviour of sinners.

Lo! I come," is his own language, in the prospect of his incarnation, "in the volume of thy book it is written of me: to do thy will I take great delight."

In the second place, I pointed out the great end of

of Christ's coming into the world. The removal of guilt, the final destruction of sin, and the salvation of the sinner, were the leading designs of his appearance. "He saves his people from their sins." He had offered himself up a sacrifice, an atonement for sin, and through his death we are justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. Many subordinate ends were to be answered by his coming into the world; but the high and leading end was to save sinners, by making a perfect atonement to the law and justice of God. I shall now, as was proposed,

In the third place, Shew, how the salvation accomplished by Christ is worthy of our acceptance.

1. If Christ came into the world to save sinners, being a propitiation for their sins, then it follows, that the gospel is the proclamation of pardon to condemned sinners. Next to the gift of the Saviour, the pardon of sin is the greatest blessing God can bestow on guilty creatures. Consider from what an awful curse pardon delivers; consider to what a blessing it raises—even to the favour of God, which is the life of the soul. As the health of the body is the foundation of all temporal felicity; so the pardon of sin to the soul, is the foundation of all spiritual happiness and comfort. We may enjoy a thousand mercies, but if we carry about with us the burden of unpardoned iniquity, we must still be miserable. Had we proper ideas of the law of God; had we just views of the evil and malignity of sin; had we an affecting sight of the consequences of uncanceled guilt; how should we magnify and adore the pardoning mercy of our God? How precious are the tidings of pardon to a condemned criminal, who has forfeited his life to the laws of his country? How acceptable a blessing and privilege to be restored to liberty and life? Words cannot describe what such a person must feel when the royal mercy reaches his ears. Are we all guilty before God? Is the sentence of death

orth against us? Is the pit of destruction waiting to devour us, because we are sinners? Does Christ come into the world to save us from this death? Does he from his cross, as from a throne, proclaim pardon to every soul that believeth in him? How joyful the heart that hears and believes! How acceptable must the gospel be to the wounded spirit! How refreshing to the fearful soul! How encouraging to the drooping and humbled heart. A pardon, coming from the mercy-seat written in blood, contains in its bosom a charter of eternal life. How worthy of acceptation must Christ's coming into the world to save sinners be then to the believing redeemed soul! Light is not more acceptable to the blind; health to the sick; bread to the hungry; or life to the dying, than pardon to such a soul.

2. Christ's coming into the world to save sinners must be worthy of acceptation, as his gospel proclaims peace to those that are enemies to God by wicked works. Early did man, by his disobedience rise in acts of hostility against his Maker. God was his rightful owner, as he was his only creator. But man began to act as if he had been his own ruler and director. From that moment war between God and man commenced. Every sinful thought, every unhallowed word, every evil work is a renewal of our acts of hostility against the Lord our Maker. From day to day how are we multiplying our deeds of enmity! If one act of treason against an earthly king deserve death; O think what punishment is due to a whole life of treason and rebellion against the Lord of glory! Is it not the language of our hearts, "Who is the Lord that he should reign over us? Hence the apostle styles us "enemies to God by wicked works." Is the proclamation of peace acceptable to the ears of repenting rebels? Do they welcome the ambassador who brings to them a full and general pardon? How worthy of acceptation must he be to believing souls, who is our peace; who gave himself as a surety to procure

procure our peace, and who, before he left this world, bequeathed this peace, as a precious legacy to his church in all ages? How agreeable to hear angels at his birth proclaim, *Peace on earth!* How pleasant to attend the Saviour, and to listen to his gracious words as he approached his awful hour: "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

3. Christ's coming into the world to save sinners, must be worthy of all acceptance, as his gospel brings liberty to the captive. Think on the drudgery and wretchedness of being a slave to sin and to Satan. He is a pitiable object, who is reduced to a state of slavery, who is confined to a dark and loathesome dungeon, and loaded with chains, without power to dispose of himself. Much more to be pitied is that soul, who is ignorant of its true and solid felicity; who is the servant of sin; who is chained down by evil and wicked habits; and who is led captive by Satan at his will. How worthy of our acceptance is the revelation of a Saviour, who not only saves from the guilt of sin, but delivers from the love and power of iniquity. He will not leave his work unfinished. He will go on to increase the number of those who are made willing in the day of his power. He will send forth his arrows and sharply pierce the hearts of sinners; he will lay them low in the dust, and make them loathe themselves because of their iniquity. He will open their eyes to see their guilty and miserable state, to see his own glory and ability to save; he will send forth the Holy Spirit to subdue their corruption, to sanctify their hearts and conduct, to break their chains asunder, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to make them free indeed. How worthy of our acceptance are such intimations of grace and deliverance! How glorious to be translated from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the service of our God and Saviour? How glorious to be delivered from the thralldom of sin and

to possess the freedom and dignity of the sons of God! With what sentiments of gratitude and joy were the children of Israel filled, when they returned from a state of captivity in Babylon! In the cxxvi Psalm you have a beautiful picture drawn of their feelings. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, "our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue "with singing; then said they, The Lord hath done "great things for us, whereof we are glad." How worthy of acceptation must it be for captives, to be redeemed from the power of Satan, from the curse of the law, from the evil habits of sin; for those that formerly were travelling in the path of the destroyer, to be now walking in the way of life.

4. Christ coming into the world to save sinners is worthy of acceptation; because the gospel brings the greatest riches to poor wretched sinners. All of us, in an unbelieving state, are like the church of Laodicea: "poor, miserable, blind, and naked." Man, in a state of innocence, possessed the true riches of the soul. He had stamped on him the image of God; he resembled his Maker in righteousness and true holiness. There was light in his understanding without any darkness; the most perfect subordination in his desires and affections; the greatest purity and holiness in his will. But how is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed! He that was once so rich, is now poor indeed! He has lost by sin the favour of his God; and with this every thing that can enrich his soul. In conformity to our state of indigence, Jesus is described as the pearl of great price. In him are hid the treasures of wisdom; in him are to be found durable riches and glory. "He, who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." How worthy of acceptation is it to be enriched with the knowledge that Christ communicates to our souls! How delightful to hear him, as our great prophet, opening the counsels of God; bringing forth from

the bosom of the Father the great truths, that belong to our eternal peace! How acceptable to see the shadows fleeing away before the light of the sun of righteousness; to see those, that were sitting in darkness, now light in the Lord! How worthy of our acceptance to see those, who were formerly poor and indigent, now receiving out of his fulness; enriched with all the graces of the Holy Spirit: "Peace, joy, gentleness, love, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance!" How delightful to think that those who were without God, and without hope in the world, are now enriched with all the promises; enriched with all the blessings of that covenant, which is well ordered in all things and sure; enriched with the assured hope of an inheritance that fadeth not away! How welcome then should the gospel be to our hearts! Should we not be ready to say, "Hosannah to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord to save us?" Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, angels, God himself, they are all well pleased with the appearance of Christ in our world to save sinners. Patriarchs desired to see his day; prophets foretold it; the apostles preached it; angels announced it; God himself approved of it. How acceptable then should his appearance be to our hearts!

I now proceed to deduce some practical improvement from the view we have taken of this subject.

1. Hence we perceive the unexampled love of God and of Christ to sinners of mankind. Great unspeakably great, must have been the love of God in commissioning and sending such a Saviour into the world: and great must have been the love of Christ to the souls of men, that led him to accept of such a commission—to come into a world of misery and guilt, and to redeem a church unto himself. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God so loved the world

"world"

world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." When the Jews beheld Jesus weeping at the grave of Lazarus, they exclaimed: "Behold how he loved him." When we see Jesus leaving the mansions of glory; veiling under the form of a servant his majestic splendour; humbling himself to the deepest afflictions; suffering, bleeding, and dying for the salvation of sinners; think how much he must have loved you. The love of Christ is like his name; his name is *wonderful*; so is his love. It is wonderful in its rise, progress, issue, and blessed effects. "O, love the Lord all ye his saints! What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his mercies? they are more than can be numbered." Did he, whom patriarchs worshipped; did he, whom prophets and apostles revered, stoop from his glory to the cross, in order to save sinners? O the depths of the unfathomable riches of grace! Did he, who was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; did he, in the fulness of time, come into the world to save sinners? What love must he have felt for the souls of men! O what gratitude and love do a redeemed world owe this glorious, divine Redeemer, who came in the greatness of his strength, mighty to save! Doth he save me from the guilt of sin? Doth he destroy its love and power in my soul? Hath he conquered Satan? Hath he shut the pit of destruction? Hath he opened the gates of heaven for my reception? "O my soul! bless the Lord: let my spirit magnify the Lord, and rejoice in God my Saviour.—O Jesus! how deserving art thou to be enthroned in my heart; to be the dearest, the supreme object of all my desires and affections! O what tribute of love, of praise, and of obedience do I owe thee for such inconceivable love as thou hast shewn to my soul!" Contemplate, O Christian, a willing and an obedient Saviour. See him counting it as his meat and his drink to do the

will of his heavenly Father, till your salvation was finished. Can your hearts remain unwilling and disobedient to him? Will not the love of Christ constrain your souls, "that being delivered by him from all your enemies, you may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life?"

2. Do you see Jesus coming into the world; descending from a throne of glory, from the height of bliss, and humbling himself, as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; coming in the form of a servant: then how should his disciples, his redeemed children, while they sit at the foot of the cross, learn humility from his amazing condescension. Look at Jesus; see him, who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, taking upon him the form of a servant; see him, who was meek and lowly in heart, and say, can the seeds of pride take root in your souls? a humble Saviour, a proud sinner—what a contrast? How inconsistent the thought! Let us be clothed with humility: "for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the lowly." O Saviour! humble my proud heart; bring down every imagination that exalteth itself against thee. If angels, who never sinned, veil their faces before God, with what confusion should I, in thy presence, be covered, whose heart and life have too often, alas, been marked with disobedience to thee! O Lord, my prayer is: "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

3. Hence you may learn to put a high value on your precious and immortal souls. Christ came into the world to save them. If all the angels in glory, all the patriarchs, apostles, and prophets had been sacrificed, they could not have ransomed one soul from sin and misery. They are all creatures, and their sacrifice, as such, could have no merit; for it is impossible for angels or men to exceed the obligations that lie upon them. None could pay a ransom for the soul, but the Son of God. When he comes on so im-

important an errand; when he gives a life so precious for many; how dear must the redemption of the soul be! If your souls had been of no value, would the Son of God have bled and died for their recovery? Learn from this to put a just value upon them. Regard them as God regards them; regard them as Christ loved them; and devote them to his worship and service.

4. Consider often how Christ, when he came into the world, acted in it. Mark his contentment; see his self-denial; behold how little value he put upon the world; he engages not in its pursuits; he covets not its riches; he aspires not after its honours; he puts no value upon its perishing and fleeting enjoyments. Mark this temper of mind that was in Christ Jesus; study to put as little value on the world as your Saviour did; pass through it with the same spirit of self-denial, keeping your heart and affections equally disengaged, and at the end these sacrifices will not be in vain. You shall receive a kingdom that cannot be moved.

5. Examine yourselves by what you have heard. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: "Are you sinners? Have you been convinced of this? Are you as ready to believe that Christ came to save you? Have you your heart fixed on him for salvation? Whosoever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." If you are among the sinners that Christ came to save, the moment that his message of mercy affects your heart, that moment will the tears of penitential sorrow begin to flow. You will then know what it is to be broken in your hearts, and grieved in your minds. You will see that you have been strangers to the love, allegiance and service of God, and enemies to your own real and substantial happiness. Your language will be that of the sailor: "What shall I do to be saved!"

6. Let me exhort you to live as the sinners whom Christ came into the world to redeem. It has been

often observed, that whom he saves, he saves from the power and dominion of sin, as well as from its guilt. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." If we continue in sin, and if the love and grace of the gospel have no effect upon us, we have reason to fear that we are not among those sinners whom Christ came to save. For Christ delivers those from sin *here*, whom he saves from the wrath to come. Mark what a change took place in the feelings and views of Paul, who here reckoned himself the chief of sinners. But did he always remain so? "Where sin abounded, did not grace much more abound?" He gave good evidence by his change of deportment, what the salvation of Christ had done for him. It made him a new man; it made him act and live as an heir of glory. It made him to abound in the work of the Lord; It made him so run as to obtain, to fight the good fight, to war a good warfare, and to keep a conscience void of offence both towards God and towards man; forgetting the things that were behind, he pressed on towards the mark of the prize of his high calling. O the greatness and power of the love and grace of God, when it operates on the most obstinate and perverse heart! Paul stands as a pattern of the saving power of Christ: He stands likewise as a model of the reforming change that will distinguish every soul that Jesus saves and redeems from destruction. Such a soul will study to have a conversation as becometh the gospel, to adorn the doctrine of Christ in the world. Such a soul will study to have its fruit unto holiness, that the end may be everlasting life.

In the 7th and last place, Let sinners be encouraged to come to Christ. He has come to them, and why will they not be induced to come unto him? He is a compassionate, a tender-hearted Saviour. From the throne of his glory he pities you in your forlorn state; and is still inviting you, as he did sinners in the days of his flesh: "Come unto me all ye that be

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“bour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He is inviting you all, even the chief of sinners, to come to him; and can you resist the kind call? Will you despise the gracious message? Will you reject the only remedy that can save your perishing souls? Consider, sinners, to what inconceivable wretchedness and misery you expose yourselves, while you remain strangers to Christ and the precious blessings of his purchase! Consider, on the other hand, the high value of those riches which he confers on all who believe in his name. Let all that is good and excellent; all that is great and important; induce you to come to him that you may be saved. “To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” Accept of this salvation; improve the report of the gospel; look to Jesus for his spirit and grace. He hath promised to pour out his spirit on returning sinners; and he is faithful to his promise. If then you have believed; if you have received Christ as your Almighty Saviour; if you are now enriched with the treasures of his grace; you will unite with the apostle in the words of our text: “This,” indeed? “is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief.” Amen.

SERMON VI.

MATTHEW XI. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

THESE words contain an encouraging and gracious invitation to all "who are grieved in their minds," on account of sin, or oppressed with a burden of guilt. They were spoken by him, who was deeply interested in the salvation of men. He saw the extent of that guilt and misery, which hung over our apostate race; and which, if unremoved, and unpardoned, must embitter their best enjoyments. When he uttered these words, he knew there could be no defence; no security to sinners from the demands of justice, and the curse of the divine law, without his protecting and saving arm. It was this consideration that moved the compassionate breast of the divine Saviour to invite sinners of mankind to come unto him, and to propose himself as the rest and quiet of weary and sin-burdened souls.

In discoursing on these words, I shall, in the first place, shew why Jesus, in the days of his flesh, so earnestly

earnestly and so frequently invited sinners to come unto him.

In the second place, consider what is implied in the call itself.

In the third place, point out the different characters invited, here described as weary and heavy laden.

In the fourth place, shew, what is implied in coming to Christ; and,

Lastly, shall suggest a few motives to induce sinners to comply with the invitation here given.

I. In the first place, I am to mention some reasons why Jesus, in the days of his flesh, so earnestly invited sinners to come unto him.

1. Christ, as the Saviour of sinners, invited them to come to him; because he received an express and ample commission from the Father for this very purpose. When we say he received a commission from the Father, we mean not that he was inferior to the Father. The scriptures every where ascribe divinity to our Saviour, and represent him as equal in power and glory with the Father. As mediator, he is said to receive power and glory from the Father. Accordingly in the verse preceding the text; he says "all things are delivered unto me of the Father." To invite weary and heavy laden sinners was a principal part of those things delivered to his care and management as our mediator. We have the Saviour's commission at full length in the prophecies of Isa. lxi. 1, 2, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the
"spirit

"spirit of heaviness; that they might be called true
 "of righteousness; the planting of the Lord, that he
 "might be glorified."

We find our Saviour applying this important passage to himself, in the gospel by Luke, iv. 18, 19, 20.
 "And he began to say unto them, 'This day is this
 "scripture fulfilled in your ears.'" verse 21. From
 comparing both together, we learn that Jesus, our
 Redeemer, is commissioned and sent to poor,
 broken hearted sinners; to invite those that are bowed
 down with the spirit of heaviness, to come unto him
 as their rest and relief. If this was the great purpose
 of his appearance in the world, see how faithfully he
 executes his commission; see with what diligence
 and earnestness he discharges this part of his office.
 "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy
 "laden, and I will give you rest—I am not sent, but
 "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.——My
 "commission," as if the Saviour had said, "extended
 "to sinners only; my incarnation, my life, my sufferings,
 "my death, my resurrection, my ascension, my
 "my gospel, all are the property of sinners. This
 "was the work given me to do—to live, to obey, to
 "suffer, to die for sinners of mankind. Wherever
 "they are, there my business is; wherever they can
 "be found, there my invitation reaches; there my
 "gospel may be preached."

2. Christ, as our Mediator, invites sinners; because
 he himself, when he stood in the room of guilty
 men, experienced what it was to be burdened with
 the sins of a believing world. Hence he is said to
 have "carried our sins in his own body on the tree."
 "to be wounded for our transgressions; to be bruised
 "for our iniquities; though he knew no sin, yet he
 "was made sin for us, that we might be made the
 "righteousness of God in him." These expressions
 leave us no room to doubt, why "he was a man of
 "sorrows and acquainted with grief." Think then
 what a load he must have sustained in those moments
 when

when the whole guilt of a redeemed world was imputed to him; when he made his soul an offering for sin. It was then he experienced the weight; it was then he felt the burden of sin; he was therefore moved with a compassionate concern for those that labour under it. All the reproaches, the stripes, the wounds he bore in his humble and suffering state, made him view sinners with a tender and sympathizing eye. His soul pities, and his words express what his heart feels: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden."

3. Christ invited sinners to come unto him, because he knew better than they, in what a sad and deplorable state they are, while lying under the curse of the divine law, and exposed to the justice of heaven. The alarming state and condition of sinners were seen by his omniscient eye, in all their deplorable consequences. He knew that the threatenings of God were no less certain than his promises. He knew the true meaning and import of what the Spirit of God says: "Lo! they that are far from thee shall perish." He knew that all who did not come to him as their rest, would be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. We may live in the greatest outward abundance, but if we live at a distance from God, all our fancied happiness will prove nothing in the end but real misery. Jesus, sensible of this, and perceiving the danger to which we are exposed, invites us to come unto him. From the earnestness and frequency of his intreaties and exhortations with sinners, we may learn the greatness of the danger that threatens every dead, unrenewed, and unsanctified sinner. Are you interested in the happiness of any former friend, any brother, or child? Do you see them at any time in a situation of imminent danger? Do you see them walking along the edge of a precipice, or rushing upon a fatal spot? in proportion to the danger you apprehend, are not your intreaties, your exhortations

exhortations and warnings the more earnest and pressing? Hence we may account for the earnest invitations of our blessed Lord: he saw the fearful precipice of eternal darkness on which we stood; he saw the dreary chambers of despair; he saw the place where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth where no ray of hope, or of comfort ever reaches: in order that none of us might come into that place of utter darkness, he redoubles his intreaties: he again and again invites sinners of mankind to come unto him. Man knows not, at least he thinks not, what claims the divine law has upon him: He sees not the eternal punishment which divine justice can inflict. Jesus, who paid a full and sufficient ransom for the sins of men, knows the claims of the one, and the equitable demands of the other. It is his certain knowledge of the imminent danger of sinners, which makes him anxious that they should flee from the wrath to come, and find rest and quiet to their souls, by believing in his name.

4 Christ, as mediator, invites sinners of mankind; because this tends much to the glory of his free and sovereign mercy. In the work of redemption it seems to be the aim of the infinite wisdom of God to provide for the display of his own glory, as well as to secure our salvation. Every sinner that is invited, every sinner that is saved, brings honour and glory to the divine compassions. Every part of our salvation, every mean employed to accomplish it, serves to display, to magnify, and exalt the riches of divine mercy. This is the darling attribute of God; and he has been careful of nothing so much as to glorify it in the redemption of lost men. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, he entertained thoughts and purposes of mercy to poor perishing sinners. When he appeared in our world, he convinces us, by his earnest invitations, that he forgets not his first intentions of love. If he loved his people before all time, he glorifies in his mercy and grace by inviting them to come unto him. Is the guilty criminal, who had forfeited his life

the laws of his country, honoured with his sovereign's pardon? Is the sentence of death, which he dreaded and which filled his pensive and solitary hours with rejection and sorrow, averted from his head? Is he restored to life, to liberty, to happiness? Ask him what ideas, what feelings he has of his sovereign's clemency and mercy! Where can the prince display the tenderness of his heart, the compassion of his breast, to not to such a despairing wretch? Is the sinner, who had ten thousand times forfeited his life to the justice of God, made happy in a sense of the pardoning mercy of heaven? Is the sentence of eternal death repealed? Instead of its execution, does he hear the language of compassion reaching his ears, and comforting his heart? Is he restored to spiritual life, liberty, and eternal happiness? What sentiments doth he now feel; what exalted adoring thoughts doth he entertain of the compassion and mercy of his God! "If this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles, will not his soul make her boast in the Lord? He will magnify the Lord, he will exalt his name for ever; because he is plenteous in mercy: In him compassions flow." I shall now,

In the second place, Shew what is more particularly implied in the invitation itself; "Come unto me."

1. It implies that sinners are by nature at a distance from God. You know in common life we never call upon a person to come to us, unless he be at a distance. When Jesus, therefore invited sinners to come unto him, it easily and naturally suggests to us, that they were at a distance from him. This is clearly implied in the invitation itself. Had they been like him in the temper of their minds, had they believed in him, there would have been no occasion for such an invitation. However near to God, man might be when first formed by his creator, in the temper of

his mind, in the purity of his desires, and the bent of his affections; since the fall, his temper, his desires and affections are strangely altered. He is now at an awful distance from God, that is, he is very unlike to God. Hence the scriptures represent the sinner as going out from the presence of the Lord; as being afar off. The prodigal son is also said to have gone into a far country, and there wasted his goods. These expressions are descriptive of our apostasy from God; of that unlikeness in our temper, wishes and pursuits to the nature and law of God, which is found in our hearts while unrenewed by divine grace: we have, in scripture, terms of a contrary import that signify our return to God. We are said to be brought near by the blood of Christ; to go unto God as our exceeding joy; to draw near unto the Lord; to return into our quiet rest, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with us; and the prodigal son is said to arise and to come to his father. Not that the sinner can actually depart from the divine presence. This is a thing impossible, for God fills heaven and earth with his presence. But we are said to go out from his presence when we forget his laws, disregard his providence, neglect his ordinances, and lay aside his worship. In this state are all mankind when the gospel comes to them. The scriptures are explicit in declaring it, and our own hearts tell us, it is a matter of fact which the maturest experience cannot deny. In our natural and unconverted state, how unlike are we to God, to his law, and holiness! What aversion in our minds, what enmity in our hearts to that which is good! It is this aversion, this enmity, that removes us at a distance from God. When Jesus, therefore, invites us to come unto him, he invites us to lay aside this aversion and this enmity, and to love him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength.

2. The invitation implies that there is no other way of salvation, but by coming to Christ. The prediction

dictions, the types, the plain and metaphorical language of scripture, all lead us to him, as the only Saviour, as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. In all his interviews with sinners, while he tabernacled among us, he claimed, as his essential titles, "I am the way, and no man cometh to the Father but by me. I am the door, the way, the truth, and life everlasting." The apostle also styles him, "the new and living way;" as if all other ways of salvation were dead and useless. When he invites sinners to come unto *him*, it imports, that there is no other name, no other blood, no other sacrifice, given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved. If the sinner, therefore, does not come to Jesus as his Saviour and intercessor, the Almighty will speak to him in his wrath, and vex him in his sore displeasure. If sinners do not come to Christ, rely on his word, and trust to his obedience and death, they may be assured they can never come to heaven, to happiness, and to glory. All other ways of access are shut up against us. The law of God is no more friendly to us, the justice of God is our determined enemy. These have shut the gates of heaven against us, and we have no influence, no strength, no wisdom of ourselves to open them. If we wish to obtain admission there, if we wish to have access to the divine presence, it must be by Christ Jesus, the righteous.

3. The invitation suggests to us, that sinners are fully warranted to come unto Christ, and embrace him as their Saviour. In the first stages of conviction, when a door of hope is just opening to the sinner; if, at this season, he thinks of the holy nature of God, if he reflects on the number and greatness of his own iniquities; comparing his heart with the divine law; and if he sees how vile he is, how deserving of punishment; it is not to be wondered at, though he should not believe the report of the Lord, though he should hesitate to give full credit to the divine testimony. This is the season when Satan musters up all his devices to alarm

the sinner with the heinous circumstances of his guilt when he labours to fill him with despair; and to persuade him that he has sinned away his day of mercy, and that he must die in his sins. The dark and feeble state into which the sinner sinks, favours the devices of Satan, and he gives way too much to a spirit of unbelief. The invitation in the text is designed, in a particular manner, for the encouragement and comfort of such awakened, but dejected penitents. Never was there a clearer title given, or a more undisputed right secured to the divine forgiveness, than what the words of this gracious invitation convey. They give the most undoubted warrant to the chief of sinners to come to Christ. Whatever objections may arise in his mind, from a sense of his own vileness and unworthiness, here they are all obviated and answered. Come unto me, however deplorable, however wretched, however guilty. The sinner, how weary, or heavy laden soever he may be, is not only permitted, but warmly and graciously invited: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Be not discouraged to accept his invitation. Your sins may be great and many. They may be attended with highly aggravating circumstances. You may be sinking under a load of guilt and pollution; the words of the text speak comfortable language to your hearts: "Be of good cheer; come unto me, and your sins shall be forgiven you." Let us now,

In the third place, consider, the characters described in our text as "weary and heavy laden." As these words were addressed to the Jews, it is probable our Lord had in view the ceremonial law—a yoke which neither they, nor their fathers were able to bear. They were weary and heavy laden with a multiplied round of ceremonies. He calls upon them to commence his disciples, and to follow him; and in the invitation of the text, he promises to grant them a full and perfect freedom from this oppressive burden.

But

But this idea, or interpretation, does not come up to what our Saviour had undoubtedly in view. The burden he had in his eye was infinitely more grievous and afflicting : It was the insupportable burden of sin ; the burden which the Psalmist, who was a true penitent, affirms to be too heavy for him to bear. This, every awakened, convinced sinner finds it to be. When he is brought to view sin as it is, stript of all those pleasing disguises, in which the tempter and the carnal appetites generally represent it, how heavy a load does it prove to his soul ! Deluded by the gay and promising prospect of fancied pleasure, the sinner boldly ventures on the destructive paths of folly. At first, after a few struggles are over, sin begins to sit light and easy on his mind. He is seen to proceed from vanity to vanity, from vice to vice, without check or remorse. The habit of doing evil grows upon him, and at length he seems to be past feeling. Nay, sometimes he is seen to grow so hardened, as even to glory in his shame, and to take pleasure in the commission of those sins, that are afterwards found to make him weep bitterly. The sinner, at this stage of his iniquity, may not be weary and heavily laden. He may have little or no consciousness of guilt ; he may have no knowledge of the extent and sanction of the divine law ; he may have no fear, at least no heart affecting apprehensions of the deserved punishment it threatens. But when the law of God comes home with killing power, when the spirit of God convinces of sin, all the bitter reproaches and stinging horrors of an awakened conscience begin to be felt. Then sin appears to be, what it really is, wretched drudgery. All its pleasures and profits vanish, and nothing is left behind but a heavy burden on the mind. When the odious nature of sin, and its fatal consequences are seen in this alarming manner, the sinner rises from the sleep of death, and feels the most pungent sense of sorrow. The most fearful, anxious, and uneasy thoughts pass through his mind.

Then he sees sin to be enmity against a creator; against his first and best benefactor; his first and best friend; against a bleeding, dying Saviour. Then he is full of anguish. Then he begins to complain, to sigh and groan; to be pricked in his heart on account of sin. Then, for the first time, he sees the need of a Saviour; then he sees the fitness, wisdom and glory of redemption; then, for the first time, he learns to put a just and high value on the work of redemption. What a heavy burden is to the body, at this season of deep conviction, so is sin to the soul.

1. The sinner begins to be burdened with a sense of guilt. It is then he sees how much he has been an object of the divine displeasure. He sees how, by increased guilt, he has provoked the God that made him; how he has repeatedly affronted, and lightly esteemed the Saviour. When his eyes are thus opened, to see the justice of God writing bitter things against him, who can tell what a weight oppresses his spirit! A provoked and insulted Jehovah, a broken law, destruction having no covering; all meet to convince the sinner what a bitter thing it is to sin against heaven. The baseness and ingratitude of the sinner's conduct, then become feelingly burdensome to his awakened soul. It lies like a heavy load on the conscience, till the love and grace of the gospel touch and comfort the heart. When the throne of mercy, instead of the throne of judgement, is seen; when the invitations of mercy, instead of the threatenings of Sinai, are heard; then the soul begins to feel that peace of mind which passeth all understanding; then it begins to know what it is to enjoy a gracious sense of the favour of God; what it is to possess a conscience sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

2. The invitation is addressed to them that are labouring and struggling with the power of sin. In the day of carnal security, insensibility possesses the mind. We are then dead and unconcerned about purity.

ourity, or guilt; about heaven, or hell. But when the moments of conviction arrive; when the conflict between the old and new man commences in good earnest; the strength, the power of sin is felt as a heavy burden. Formerly the sinner, without much uneasiness, or regret, followed wherever passion, temptation, or the world, led the way; as he proceeded in the path of the destroyer, he felt no desire to check, or restrain the power of sin; But now, in his awakened state, he feels a holy indignation against it; a holy courage to oppose and resist it. A ravenous beast will seldom hurt, or injure, a person, if allowed to pass unmolested. It is opposition that rouses and kindles up the ferocity of his nature. In like manner, sin will not disturb the sinner, will create no uneasiness, if quietly indulged. It is resistance that rouses and increases its malignancy. It is the spirit warring against the flesh, that arms sin with all its hostile power. In this severe, repeated conflict, say, experienced Christian, what weariness, what struggles, what an oppressive burden have you not felt! Have you not adopted the fervent prayer of the apostle: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" To such as you the invitation is addressed. You are encouraged to come to Jesus, as your strength and rock of defence. He will make his grace sufficient for you in every conflict: He will perfect his strength in your weakness.

3. The invitation is addressed to those who are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not." In this class may be comprehended the greatest part of mankind. Alas! how many, in one shape or other, are labouring and heavy laden with the devices of their own hearts; with vain attempts to work out their own salvation, and to recommend themselves to God! They see not the beauty and perfection of that salvation which Jesus has already finished. They see not that

that his obedience unto death is the only sacrifice on which sinners can depend, to secure their peace with God. Without divine principles, without divine strength, they are labouring to work out a righteousness of their own. How few have their eyes fixed on the Saviour for salvation, as the author and finisher of his people's faith. They forget that Jesus is the end of the law to every one that believeth. They forget how impossible it is in our fallen state, to give a perfect and unerring obedience to the whole law; and nothing short of this, if made the condition of life, will, or can be accepted of God. We may dream of compromising the matter with the Almighty; of bringing as much obedience as we can, and leaving it to the Saviour to make up the rest; but there is nothing in the word of God that flatters our pride, or favours this delusion. It is the glory of Christ to save sinners by his own righteousness and obedience unto death; and he will not give his glory to another. If ever any sinner is saved, it must be by believing, that Jesus hath put an end to sin, by the sacrifice of himself; that he hath finished transgression, by bringing in an everlasting righteousness. Think of this, then, ye who are depending on the merit of your imperfect obedience, and come to Christ. By relying on him you will be saved; by relying on yourself you never can. His death, must be the price of your ransom. His obedience and righteousness, must be the garments of the saints; clothed in which, they shall appear before God, holy and without blemish.

4. The invitation is addressed to those, who are labouring and heavy laden, on account of having little or no comfortable sense of the special love and gracious countenance of God. This is a painful source of uneasiness to believers. "When the
"Almighty giveth quietness, who then can make
"trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then
"can behold him? Whether it be done against a na-
"tion,

tion, or against a man only. Job xxxiv. 29. In a little wrath he often hides his face for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon them, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer." Isaiah liv. 8. The same prophet, in the lix. chap. 2 verse, assigns the true cause of that heaviness of heart with which the people of God are often afflicted: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." When he is said to hide his face from his children, we are to understand that he removes, or withdraws for a season, all, or any of those tokens or comforts whereby his gracious presence with us, his peculiar love and providential care towards us, are usually and sensibly testified. "I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and afflictions shall befall them, so that they will say in that day: Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us? And I will surely hide my face in that day." Are there any sensible that the care and mercies of a kind providence are apparently withdrawn; and that the effects of God's special regard, which made the business of life and the occurrences of the day, run on in a smooth channel, seem to be suspended? Are your outward comforts and concerns perplexed, embittered or removed? Does God seem to tell you, by a frowning providence, that he does not interest himself favourably in your concerns? Is he removing every visible help? Does he blast all your endeavours to bring deliverance? Does he shut up every door of hope; and does he look to you, in every object and from every quarter, as an angry, sin-avenging God? You were formerly sensible of the love of Christ shed abroad in your heart; you lived and walked in the light and comforts of the Holy Ghost; but do you now complain that his mercies are clean gone? Do you mourn that no sensible refreshments come from the Spirit of grace? Are your souls now emptied of their joys, comforts,

comforts, and graces? Are your spirits sunk and drooping? Are your hopes beclouded? Are your hearts heavy? Does corruption rise and oppose the work and love of God? To such as you the invitation is addressed. It seems to say to you: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God," Psal. xlii. 11. It is the Saviour alone that can restore to you the joys of his salvation; it is he alone that can make providence smile; that can pour into your hearts the consolation of his spirit. It is a believing view of him alone that can scatter the clouds that had gathered thick around you; that can remove all the fears that have disturbed and perplexed your hearts.

S E R M O N VII.

MATTHEW xi. 28.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

IN prosecuting this delightful and encouraging subject, I have endeavoured, first, to shew why Jesus, in the days of his flesh, so earnestly and frequently invited sinners to come unto him. Secondly, I have shewn what is more particularly implied in the invitation itself. It implies, that sinners are by nature at a distance from God; that there is no other way of salvation than by coming to Christ; and that sinners, by this invitation, are fully warranted to come to Christ, and to embrace him as their Saviour. Thirdly, I have considered the characters described in my text, as "weary and heavy laden." Those of this description are burdened with a sense of guilt; they are labouring under the power of sin; or they are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not; and, lastly, they, to whom the invitation is addressed, may be considered as those who are labouring and heavy laden, on account of having little or no comfortable sense

sense of the special love, and gracious countenance of God, I now proceed,

In the fourth place, to shew what is implied in *coming to Christ*.

1. To come to Christ is of the same import as believing in him. Hence our Saviour himself says, John vi. 35. "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and *he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*" Here believing on and coming to Christ are terms of the same signification. To come to Christ, is, therefore, to believe on him. "Faith in Christ," says our Catechism, "is a grace whereby we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation as he is preached in the gospel." It is giving a full and unreserved credit to the record of God, so that that credit or belief of the divine testimony shall influence our hearts and conduct. It includes in it a firm and determined assent of the understanding; a decided approbation and consent of the heart to every promise, to every doctrine and declaration which Jesus has made in the scriptures of truth. The soul that believes the report of the Lord, simply adopts the language of the apostle; he considers it to be "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance," that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Whatever the scriptures declare concerning his incarnation and life, his expiatory sufferings and death, his resurrection and ascension, his prevailing intercession at the right hand of God, and his final appearance to judge the world, meet with the cordial assent and approbation of the Christian. Divine faith, in a particular manner, rests on the virtue and efficacy of the atonement of Jesus, in the character of Mediator; on the perfection of his obedience to the law of God, as constituting a righteousness sufficient to justify every sinner who confides in it for acceptance. Divine faith then, is a firm persuasion of the record of heaven: "God hath given eternal life to as many as believe in him, and this life is in his

is Son. What is it in common life to believe? Is it not to place a confidence in any thing as a truth that is spoken, or promised by another, so as to act upon that confidence or credit we give to what is spoken or promised? What is scripture faith then? Is it not to place a confidence and to have a firm persuasion in any thing, as a truth, that is spoken or promised by Christ our Saviour, so as to act upon that persuasion or confidence, in what is spoken or promised by him? Whenever we begin to doubt of his promises, there is an essential defect in our faith. But not to dwell on abstract views of this subject, I shall shew how faith disposes, or affects, the soul that comes to Christ.

1. To come to Christ, under the influence of divine faith, is to have the soul heartily disposed to choose him as its chief good; as its supreme portion, and the source of all its happiness. David observes and regrets the extreme folly of earthly and wicked men, in placing all their delight in worldly enjoyments. But the soul, that is disposed by grace to come to Christ, is convinced that all these are empty and perishing in comparison of his favour and love, which are better than life. Give the believer a feeling sense of the divine mercy and the all sufficiency of his God, and he rests satisfied. To walk in the sight of his countenance is life to the child of God, even when destitute of many earthly comforts. It is a difficult matter to persuade mankind of this truth; to convince them that the happiness of an immortal spirit must be of a divine nature; and that it must consist in a sense of the pardoning mercy and love of God. Till a full conviction of the insufficiency of worldly enjoyments be wrought in the soul; till it be wrought to see the vileness and danger of sin, it never can be cheerfully disposed to return to God, as its only and all-sufficient portion. When faith strips the world of its varnish, and shews it to be a precarious, deceitful, a perishing good; and when it unfolds

the immense and infinite blessings of the gospel pointing them out as a certain, durable, and never failing source of happiness, then the soul is ready to cry out : " The Lord is my portion. My soul shall be *satisfied*, even as with marrow and with fatness. It then relinquishes every hope of salvation, but which arises from Christ ; every degree of confidence in the flesh, and in every creature ; and it comes to Jesus as to an all-sufficient good, " who has made all things " ready " for its spiritual and eternal happiness.

2. To come to Christ, under the influence of divine faith, is to have the soul going out towards him in warm and holy desires ; to have its whole power tending towards him, and resting upon him as the object of the Christian's love. In what we have already said, this is evidently implied ; for we never choose any thing as our portion, or chief good, without placing the affections of the heart upon it. To come to him, therefore, under the influence of divine faith, is to have the mind exercised in the contemplation of his perfections ; the will, in choosing and embracing him ; the desires, in following hard after him ; and the affections, in being decidedly fixed upon him. You will see, if you read the forty-second Psalm, 1, 2, 3. verses, how fervently David expresses the ardour of his desires after God : " As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : When shall I come and appear before God." God, as a God of love in Christ, is the object of desire to the believing soul. It is faith in him, as such, that gives rise to this thirsting after him. You see, in the above passage, that nothing but God was in David's mouth ; nothing but God was in his heart ; nothing but God in his desires. David had a kingdom ; he had a throne, he had a crown ; he had honours, subjects, riches, in abundance. But these appear empty, without heart-affecting impressions of the divine favour. God was the supreme object

object of his love. The desires which he felt, and the affections which he expressed, are the desires and affections of every one who cometh to Christ. Whom have I in heaven but thee. O Lord!" is the language that corresponds to the feelings of the believing soul, "and there is none in all the earth I desire beside thee. This God is my God, and he will be my guide even unto death."

3. To come to Christ, under the influence of divine faith, is not only to choose him for our portion; we have the desires of the soul going out after him; but it is to have the heart deeply affected with godly sorrow on account of sin. This is evidently implied in the approach of the soul to Christ. We can never choose him as our portion; we can never feel our desires panting after him, without a cordial renunciation of our sinful pleasures and vain pursuits. Wherever these fervent determinations exist, they are always accompanied with a godly sorrow for sin. A penitential spirit is evidently implied in our approaches to Christ. As we advance, we look upon him, whom we have pierced, and mourn, as one mourneth for an only child. No soul ever came to Christ without feeling and tasting the bitterness of sin. At a distance from God, faith in his word convinces us that we are in a miserable and ruinous condition. It is this true sense of our sin and ruined state by nature that is a powerful mean, in the hand of the Spirit, to draw our hearts to God. The prodigal son never thought of returning to his father's house, till he experienced the hardships of a starving condition. It was a sense of these that filled him with regret and compunction of heart, and made him wish to possess once more the smiles of a parent's love. Pressed on every side with want and misery, he forms the resolution of renouncing all the sinful pleasures and vanities of the world. This history is held out to us in the gospel, as a picture of that repentance unto life that needeth not to be repented

of, and will in some measure be felt by every soul that comes to Christ.

4. To come to Christ, under the influence of divine faith, is to have delight in his ordinances. These ordinances are, the reading the word; hearing it preached; prayer and praise; and all the other positive institutions he hath enjoined. In the use of these God hath promised to meet with his humble worshippers and to bless them; he hath promised to admit them to nearer access, and to favour them with the smiles of his love. Accordingly, they love worship towards his holy habitation, "where his honour dwelleth. They come into his house in his abundant grace, and in his fear worship towards his holy place: they long stedfastly to see his power and his glory in his sanctuary. They frequently say, 'unto God as their chief joy.'" To come to Christ therefore, is to give a cheerful, constant, and habitual attendance on all the means of grace. It is also to read, with solemn attention, what he has revealed to make his testimonies their delight and their comfort; to make his word a light to their feet and a lamp to their path; it is to make his statutes their songs in the house of their pilgrimage. To come to Christ is also to delight in prayer and holy meditation; to unbosom ourselves to our gracious Father in Christ; to taste as well as to converse with the powers of the world to come. To delight in his ordinances; frequently to take into our hands the memorials of his love in dying for us; and to possess a devotedness of heart to God, is to come to Jesus in a soul-satisfying and comforting manner.

5. To come to Christ, under the influence of divine faith, is to shew an unfeigned subjection to his authority, as our sovereign and king. Few have objections to receive and listen to the promises of Christ; but alas! too many reject his precepts, and cast his commandments behind their back. To submit to him, therefore, as a sovereign, as well as to receive

as a Saviour, and to be conformed to his laws as well as to receive his promises, is the best evidence of our having come to Christ under the influence of a living faith: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." What is the exhortation that immediately follows the text? "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly." You all know that the word *yoke*, is a metaphorical term, signifying his commands. To come into any family as a domestic, always supposes that you agree to act according to the regulations of the house, and to submit to the authority of the master of the society, of which you are now members. To come into the family of Jesus; to make a part, and to be members of his church, must imply an equal obligation to act according to his laws, and to obey his supreme and divine authority. To say that we come to Christ, and yet live in the daily and habitual neglect of his laws, is a solemn mockery of the Almighty. Sin must not only be abandoned in the heart; but godliness must beautify and adorn the life of every one that has come to Jesus.

I shall now, in the last place, propose several motives and considerations to enforce the invitation in the text.

1. Consider, O sinner, as long as you reject this invitation, you are in a state of guilt and misery. It is indeed impossible to conceive any thing so dismal as the state of an impenitent sinner. If you do not come to Christ, you have nothing to expect but a fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation to consume you. I beseech you then to examine yourselves whether you have come to Christ in the manner we have pointed out. Many are the questions that have been put to you since you came into the world; but a more serious and important one has never put to you than I am now putting. "Have

"you come to Jesus as the Redeemer of souls, or have you not?" Remember your all depends on the answer you can return. If you are still at a distance from Christ; if you are still dead in trespasses and sins; if you are still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; if you are still unrenewed in the spirit of your minds; your state is miserable and wretched beyond conception. The sun may rise and gladden the world with his light, but it should not gladden your breast; for its beams are conducting you to the chambers of darkness. The beauties of the heavens above, and of the earth below may smile around you: but they should impart no joy to your heart while you remain at a distance from Christ, and an enemy to his gospel. Your days should pass on in sorrow and sadness; for every portion of your time is bringing you nearer and nearer to feel the effects of that curse which was at first denounced against sin. Nothing but coming to Christ can save you from the place of torment, or deliver you from the curse of the divine law.

2. Consider, O sinner! the time you have in this world is short, and you know not how soon the last call shall be given you to come to Christ. Perhaps some here may never hear another sermon; may never be favoured with another invitation to come to Jesus. The angel of death may already have received his commission, signed and sealed by the irrevocable word of God, to seize and to make you prisoners of the grave. What a motive is this to mind the things that belong to your peace ere they be forever hid from your eyes. Delays are dangerous in the business of life; but how fatally dangerous do they prove in the concerns of eternity. None of you can be too young to become believers in Christ; none of you can be too young to be delivered from the bondage of sin and of Satan; none of you can be too young to be made heirs of eternal life; none of you are too young to die. You can never, therefore, be too young to come to Christ, and to begin a life that

will end in heaven. If you saw your true interests; if you saw the worth of your souls; if you knew the solid pleasures of religion; you would never put off the one thing needful to old age.

3. Consider, how guilty soever you may be, if you come to Christ, he will graciously receive you. No unworthiness will hinder your reception. "Who-soever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." He came into the world to save sinners of every description, and he will be glorified by a redeemed world through eternal ages, for saving the vilest and most unworthy of his creatures. For your encouragement, he has received many as guilty and polluted as you are. Paul, who counted himself the chief of sinners, who had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, at last obtained mercy. Many are the instances, on record in the book of God, of sinners who have been washed in the blood of Jesus, and sanctified by the spirit of God. How many are now standing before the throne of God in glory, who were once wallowing in the mire and filth of this world. What encouragement is this for the chief of sinners to come unto Christ!

4. Consider how Christ hath come to you. He came into our world, having his glory veiled, in the form of a servant, to seek and to save that which was lost. He came "as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," to invite us to apply to him. By coming to you he suffered more than you can ever suffer in coming to him. Whatever difficulties may be in your way to Christ; yet greater difficulties in his way to you. These difficulties did not discourage him. Did he veil for a season his divine glory; did he expose himself to a cruel train of sufferings, to an ignominious and painful death; and when invited by him, shall you not leave your sins and come to him? Shall Christ come from heaven to die for you, to be scourged and buffeted, shall he bleed and die upon a cross, and shall we, when invited, refuse

to sit with him on his throne? If he hath assumed our nature, passing by the state of fallen angels, to save us, shall we reject the counsel of God against ourselves? How provoking, how unpardonable will be our iniquity! Every call you now hear and reject will increase the torment of that fire which is unquenchable.

I come now to apply this subject.

1. Hence we may learn the love that Christ bears to sinners of mankind. He takes notice of the sad condition of his people in the world. Whether their state be afflicted and disconsolate, or carnal and secure, Christ has their welfare and interest at heart, and invites them to come out of it. If he had not loved them, he would not have been so earnest and affectionate in his invitations: If he had not loved them, he would never have pointed out the danger to which they are exposed. No such invitations reach the abodes of despair: They are reserved in chains of darkness till the judgement of the great day. How differently hath he acted to you? You are invited to enjoy blessings, at which angels wonder; you are invited to possess privileges and comforts that shall never have an end; you are invited to look beyond this suffering, perplexed and sinful state, to a place of rest—to those new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. When we discover anxiety to have a person, friend, or child near us, is it not a proof of our strong love and attachment to them? The more earnestly Christ invites us, the more affectionately he loves us. He is uneasy to see sinners stand at a distance from him. But when they come to him, he sees of the travel of his soul and is satisfied. He rejoices over them to do them good.

2. Hence we may learn the happiness of those who have come to Christ. Your blessings and privileges are to be envied by monarchs. What have they that can compare with the blessedness of the poor

disciple

disciple of Jesus? They may live in affluence and ease for three score years and ten; and then descend into the cold mansions of the grave, which is to be to them a gloomy passage to endless misery. Your happiness, O Christian, who have come to Jesus, is never to have an end: It is as immutable as Jehovah himself. No wonder then that so many prayers have been offered up to a throne of grace, to be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. There is little, very little in this world to refresh your hearts; to please your eyes; to entertain your ears, if you have come to Jesus and tasted that the Lord is gracious. The very first moment you came to him, you were blessed and happy creatures. His image is reviving within you; his spirit dwells in your hearts; clothed in the righteousness of the saints, you shall be able to stand in the presence of God, when others shall be confounded. All that the mercy and love of God can bestow shall be yours. You come to a God who can bless you in time, comfort you at death, and make you happy for evermore.

3. Let me not dismiss you from this place without beseeching all of you to make a personal application of what you have heard, by examining your own hearts. Have you chosen Christ, or the world, for your chief portion? Which of them, were you stretched upon your death-bed, could you appeal to heaven and say you have chosen? To which of them do your affections go out with the greatest warmth. Is your choice decided for time or eternity? for heaven, or hell? Have you ever been penetrated with a sense of guilt, and seen that you stand as much in need of pardon and forgiveness from the throne of God, as the sick stand in need of medicine; or the fainting of food; or the blind of sight. Have you ever been affected with a sense of sin, so as to mourn over it? Or do you live easy and unconcerned about your guilty state? Have you any relish or delight in using the means of grace, and the ordinances of religion?

religion? Or do the pleasures of sense and the amusements of life give more satisfaction to your souls? Be not deceived, for God is not mocked: for whatever you sow you shall reap; if you sow to the flesh, you shall of the flesh reap corruption; if you sow to the spirit, you shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Have you come to Christ so as to make his laws the rule of your life; and his example the model of your holy conduct? Or, afraid of being singular in the cause of Christ, are you living as the world lives, according to the maxims, and customs, and examples of those, whose God is their belly, whose end is eternal destruction? Let conscience, let the word of God deal impartially with your hearts. It is better now to be condemned, than afterwards to stand convicted at the seat of judgement: It is better now to feel the bitterness of repentance, than afterwards to lift up your eyes in hell, being in torment.

S E R M O N VII.

JOHN IV. 10.

Jesus said, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

THESE words are a part of the instructive conversation that passed between Jesus and the woman of Samaria. All the incidents of this history are simple and beautiful. On the one hand, we see the condescension and earnestness of the Saviour, to seek and to save that which was lost; on the other, we are called to observe how deep conviction of guilt is gradually introduced into the mind of a careless, proud, and ignorant sinner. This was the happiest and most propitious day this woman had ever seen. Till now she had lived under the power and domination of sin, "without God and without hope in the world." Jesus knew all the circumstances of her guilty state; he saw that her chief concern, or main business in life was to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof; and that she was proceeding with a hasty and inconsiderate pace in the path of the destroyer.

destroyer. While she was in this state, Jesus came to Jacob's well, and entered into a familiar, heart-searching, conversation with her; and before he left her, we find her a humble and true penitent.

In discoursing on these words, I shall make a few general remarks on the whole of the history before us.

II. I mean to shew what particular truths may be derived from the words we have read.

III. Conclude with an improvement suitable to these views.

The first remark I would make is, that providence in the most gracious manner, arranges and disposes all the unexpected and unforeseen circumstances that pave the way for the humble and cordial return of the soul to God, through a mediator. These circumstances may be various, and not the same in the experience of every Christian. "There are," saith the apostle, "diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. xii. 6. God chooses sometimes to impress the heart with a serious sense of divine truth in the earlier part of life—sanctifying the soul from the womb; while others are not humbled under his mighty hand till many years and changes have passed over their heads. This was the case with the woman before us: she had had five husbands. Sometimes the great Redeemer gives energy to his word, to open the understanding to the marvellous things in his law: sometimes he manifests the striking events of his providence, to make deep and serious impressions on the careless and unconcerned sinner. On other occasions, he gives commission to the rod of affliction to teach the most useful and profitable lessons of divine wisdom. When the soul draweth nigh to the grave, and the life to its destroyers, the importance of the glad tidings of salvation is seriously felt and acknowledged. But

ever be the way, time, or circumstances, which God employs to bring our hearts nigh to his mercy-seat, it is an obvious truth from the whole tenor of scripture, that all these are providentially over-ruled by God for our conviction of sin and the establishment of our hearts, in the faith and hope of the gospel.

In the instance before us, we are told that our Saviour meant to return to Galilee; but he might have returned to Galilee by a different road, had he not intended to meet with this poor sinner at Jacob's well. The salvation of her soul seems principally to have directed his course. "He must needs go through Samaria." How great his love; how condescending his mercy; which led him, though much fatigued, to recal this wandering prodigal to himself. He saw this poor woman who lived in Sychar, dead in trespasses and sins. He saw her under the dominion of divers lusts and passions, which, if unsubdued by his spirit, would drag her at last to the place of torment. How seasonable the interview; how wisely arranged by providence are all the circumstances; how comfortable the issue! The woman comes not a moment sooner, or later than she should have done, to profit by our Lord's conversation. "Now was her accepted time; now was the hour of her merciful visitation." Had she come sooner, she would have left the place before our Lord arrived: Had she come later, the Saviour might have joined the company of the disciples. She might have missed this interview, and thereby have missed the discovery of her lost state, and the hopes of eternal salvation for ever. Who does not see that all these circumstances were arranged, and graciously disposed by the kind interposition of a good providence?

There are many other instances of a similar nature recorded in the scriptures. Does not the instance of the Ethiopian Eunuch occur here, with propriety to our minds, and serve to confirm and illustrate the observation

observation with which we set out, "that providence arranges the unexpected circumstances that pave the way for the humble and cordial return of the soul to God?" Think how seasonably Philip is commissioned; think how providentially he meets the chariot of this nobleman. Recollect how well prepared the eunuch's heart is to hear the ingrafted word of life. At the very instant he was reading the prophet, anxious to receive fuller light and knowledge into the counsels of God, the servant of the Lord arrives and preaches unto him Jesus. Take another example: Why is Paul cast into prison? Why is he arraigned on that particular occasion? Is it merely to gratify the malice of the rulers? or, does not Providence point and direct us to another and higher use—the conversion of the jailor and all his household? "Who is wise, and will consider these things, shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." If ever the hearts of any of you have been brought to a cordial reception of the Saviour and his gospel, has he not met you as he met the woman of Samaria, at some time, in some place, in some circumstance, providential, or affliction which was unexpected by you? Has he not made all his goodness to pass before you, and made you partakers of his mercy?

A second remark I would make from the history before us is, that our gracious Redeemer presents us with his love, and employs persevering pains and labour to secure an interest in our affections, and to gain a complete conquest over our hearts.

It is agreeable to the general course of his providence and the determinations of his grace, "that they who seek him shall find him." But it is equally true, from many examples in scripture, "that he is sometimes found of them that seek him not." There was nothing about this woman to attract the Saviour's notice, but her guilt, her folly, and wretchedness. She had nothing about her more than any other sinner, that gave her any previous qualification

of meetness for receiving the divine mercy. All the qualifications she possessed were an ignorant, impenitent, sinful, and froward heart. There appears no circumstances more favourable about her than these, when Jesus began to discourse with her. Yet see and admire how the compassionate Redeemer fixed his preventing, unsolicited eye of mercy and love upon her. While she was stout-hearted and far from righteousness, she is brought nigh by the blood of Christ to the mercy-seat. While she was thinking on any thing but God, on any thing but a Saviour, she is made to feel the power of his preventing and conquering grace. Has this ever been the case with any of you? While you were engaged in the ruinous pursuits of sin; while you were children of disobedience, devoted to the world, and losing your souls amidst the pleasures of time and sense; have you heard the voice of the Son of God arresting you in your thoughtless and mad career, and preventing your everlasting doom, with unmerited, unsolicited offers of himself? If this has ever been the condition of any of you, your souls will be feelingly sensible of his love, and filled with growing admiration at the astonishing manner in which he made himself known to your hearts.

But our great Redeemer not only presents us with his mercy; he employs persevering pains and labour to secure an interest in our affections, and to gain a complete conquest over our hearts. In the ninth verse, we find this woman destitute of love to mankind, and even so hard-hearted as to refuse a draught of water to quench the thirst of Jesus, because he wore the habit and had the appearance of a Jew. He must have observed him much fatigued, and perceived his necessitous circumstances; but instead of sympathy, she mocks, and treats him with neglect. She pleads the pretence of his being a Jew to refuse him the simplest fare. Did this unfeeling conduct discourage the Saviour? Did it make him lay aside

his designs of mercy to reclaim her? No; here she discovered a godlike temper. Take notice, likewise, she seems quite ignorant of the beauty and force of spiritual truths; or, if she considers them, it is in a carnal way: "Sir, whence hast thou this water?" She was disposed to dispute against her own salvation, and to deny the means of it, because she saw no outward appearance of it. Our Lord pitied this stupidity; it made him more earnest to lead her on, step by step, to the fullest conviction of her lost and ruined state, and to a confidence in him as the expected and promised Messiah. Only attend to the patience, the unwearied pains and persevering love of Jesus, till he opened her heart to receive, without the least hesitation, his divine testimony; till he opened her eyes to see the marvellous things in God's law. He uses no harsh or chiding language; he did not strive, but was meek, gentle, patiently labouring and watching for her soul. Is not this the method he still pursues with many of us? How long, alas! do we remain insensible to the voice of his mercy, providence, encouragements, and threatenings! This or that rod is sent with a message to our souls, but we heed it not. As this woman reasoned, we reason, in a carnal manner, being like her equally under the power of sense. Sometimes he loads us with his benefits, and seems determined to soften the hardness of our hearts by his love—by his unwearied goodness to lead us to repentance. But alas! how much are these misimproved; how feeble and short-lived the impressions they make on our hearts! Ignorant of our true happiness, how often have we turned a deaf ear to his most earnest invitations! While we are forsaking him, does he forsake us? No; amidst manifold provocations, much ignorance, much contempt of his grace, he is seen to persevere, till he make us fall down before him and cry out: "I perceive thou art a prophet, the Messiah, who has told me all that I ever did. What shall I do to be saved?"

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Thus Christ finds us dull and unapt to learn the way of salvation; but he will not leave us till, in a gradual manner, either by the instructions of his word, of his providence, or of his mercies, he makes us wise unto salvation. All our former provocations, or present backwardness to lay hold on eternal life, will not make the Saviour desist from his labours of love, till he has gained a complete conquest over all prejudices, hardness, and blindness of our hearts; till he form himself in our hearts the hope of glory.

A third remark I would make on this history is, that when Christ is discovered by the believing soul as the searcher of hearts, as the Messiah who knoweth all things, and who alone can give life to our souls; we feel an ardent desire to possess his favour, and at the same time are heartily disposed to use every endeavour to bring others to entertain the same exalted sentiments of the Saviour that we ourselves feel. The love of a true convert to Christ is strong, warm, and steady. Every beloved object that is suited to our circumstances, never fails to excite correspondent feelings in our minds. All the glory, power, and suitableness of the great Redeemer to the state of our souls, as guilty, ignorant, and impotent before God, cannot be feelingly perceived by the true disciple of Jesus, unless the best and most ardent affections of the heart be excited and directed towards him. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none in all the earth I desire besides thee." The heart that is brought to entertain such views of the Saviour, prefers an interest in his favour before all worldly enjoyments. He esteems him as his chief good, as his true happiness, and his present and eternal portion. His heart is first captivated, and then ravished with the marvellous love he has shewn. He cannot see the patience and long-suffering of his Saviour, without feeling all the force and obligations of divine love. He no sooner perceives Jesus to be a suitable, sufficient, unchangeable, everlasting good; but he

trusts in him as able to save to the uttermost. He returns love for love into the bosom of the blessed Jesus. But these feelings are not confined to the narrow circle of a selfish, or personal happiness; we see they are expanded to comprehend the religious and immortal interests of others.

In the conduct of this returning sinner, we find that the moment divine grace touched her heart, and she received power to believe on Jesus, she was overcome with joy; she left her pitcher; she forgot her errand to the well; and carried, with the utmost speed, an urgent message to her fellow sinners in the city: "Come see a man that told me all that ever I did;" "Is not this the Christ?" As soon as we begin to entertain proper views of the Saviour; to feel a serious concern about our own salvation, so soon do we take a sincere and hearty interest in the spiritual state of others. The love of Christ in the heart is a generous and communicative principle. It expands the love with a sacred regard to the best interests of men. Those who have attained the saving knowledge of Christ; who live most under the power of the gospel, will be most zealous and diligent in spreading the honours, and glories of his cross, among the children of men. In whatever sphere they move; whatever influence they may have in the world; they will use it to bring sinners to the embraces of the Saviour. They desire the enlargement of his kingdom. They wish to call sinners to him! Any labour they are willing to undertake, any difficulty they are ready to encounter, any reproach they are prepared to bear, if they may but recover lost sinners, and bring them back to the wisdom of the just. True grace is a social principle: It loves not to eat the heavenly manna alone. May we not suppose, that this woman would feel much anxiety to publish the condescending mercy of the Redeemer to the man, with whom she had lived as an adulteress. After she had felt what the living water meant by her own experience; after

she had come to a thorough knowledge of the person of Christ; would she be urgent to bring others to the fountain of life, and express no solicitude for the salvation of one with whom she had committed much iniquity? As they had been workers together in sin, would she not earnestly desire that they should be partakers together of the divine mercy? "I have met the Messiah," might she not say, "that told me all that ever I did. He laid all my sinful life before me; he brought home to my conscience my guilty state, and bade me call thee. He must have equally gracious designs of mercy for thy soul. He has washed and pardoned me. He will do the same for thee."

A fourth remark I would make, is that such is the love of Christ towards sinners, as no degrees of guilt, no impediments can obstruct his progress, or prevent its effects.

This woman, being a Samaritan, might have furnished Jesus with a plausible pretext to withhold his sovereign mercy. Her cold and insolent refusal of so small a favour might have made him turn from her, with a frown of indignation. Above all, her character, as a lewd and notorious sinner, might have justified the Saviour, from entering into any conversation with her. But his thoughts are not as our thoughts; his ways are not as our ways. "He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; to seek and to save that which was lost. Indeed it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save sinners; even the very chief of them who believe and obey his gospel. It is not national animosity; It is not party distinction; It is not the impediments that too often obstruct the shallow streams of human love, that will interrupt the divine mercy. Nay what is still more comfortable, it is not the most aggravated offences, the most frequent injuries, that will make the Saviour turn away with aversion from the sinner.

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This is not a solitary, or single instance of the free, unmerited, unsolicited love of your Redeemer shewn to great and daring offenders. Many are the signs and trophies of his grace, many are the monuments of his mercy, recorded in the word of God for the encouragement of the believing and returning penitent. "O that men would praise the Lord for his great goodness done unto the children of men." O that it would lead us more and more unto repentance!

A fifth remark I would make is, that Christ never asked any thing from the sinner without an intention of returning an hundred fold.

Here he asks of the woman of Samaria water out of Jacob's well, and, in return, he promises to give her living water springing up in her soul unto eternal life. The sinner indeed has nothing to give to God, but what God first gives to him. He has the best right to his own gifts. The water which Christ asked from this woman was his own, as heir of all things. But this marks the greatness of his condescension, in asking from us and accepting any thing as a sacrifice at our hand. For, what are the poor insignificant offerings, or services, we can do to him in comparison of those blessings he can and has promised to bestow on us. Christians! Jesus is now asking from you the dedication of your hearts to him as their rightful Lord. "My son give me thy heart" are words that are addressed to each of you. Can you refuse this, when you reflect that he gave his precious blood for you? Are not your hearts his sacred property, by the most solemn obligations? He is requiring you to present your bodies as living sacrifices unto him. You will not, therefore, come to him with souls unanimated with his love, when you think of the height, and depth, and breadth, and length of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. He is requiring you to sacrifice all your sins, and all your idols of vanity at the foot of his cross; and if you devoutly contemplate the sacrifices he has made in your room and stead

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from first to last, this will prove, an easy and pleasant part of your holy service. He is now requiring you to give yourselves unto the Lord, to glory in his cross, to confess him before men, and to adorn the doctrines he has taught you, by walking in his statutes and doing them: But rejoice that he has promised you sufficient strength, to enable you to discharge these duties; to give you his spirit and to make you strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He is requiring you to live above this world, as pilgrims and strangers on earth. But in return, he promises and gives you an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled; and that fadeth not away. "He is a Redeemer that will give you grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them who walk uprightly."

I now proceed to illustrate those truths that may, in a particular manner, be derived from the words of the text. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

1. An important truth, derived from these words; is, that a true and proper knowledge of Christ Jesus is absolutely necessary to salvation; and ignorance of his divine and personal glory is most ruinous to the souls of men.

It is of the greatest importance, in the concern of our salvation, to have just and honourable views of the personal glory and character of Christ. Without this we can have no clear views, no well-grounded hopes of eternal life. It is, therefore, the general scope of the word of God, to unfold his character and to place his offices, in the oeconomy of grace, and the whole mediatorial work he performs, in a rich variety of lights. All the descriptions given of him, and the many incidents by which we come to a perfect knowledge of his divine and human nature, are all designed to create confidence and trust, love and hope in our breasts.

breasts towards him. Without the knowledge of Christ, we must remain entire strangers to the nature and power of the gospel. We must know what he is in his personal glory; what he *has* done for us; what he *is* still doing; and what he *will* do at death and at the judgement of the great day. The words of the text lead us to view him as more than human; as possessing the perfections of divinity. We are called by his own express words, to look beyond his mean and humble appearance as a man, to something connected with his character, that gives him a just claim to the rights of divinity. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water." Whether this be the language of a mere creature, or the style of the true God; judge ye. Jehovah is represented in the first part of the verse as the giver of this living water; and Jesus asserts, in the last part of it, that it is equally his prerogative to impart this heavenly gift. Did ever a mere prophet, apostle, martyr, or angel dare to use such language? "If thou knewest who it is that saith unto thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

Besides these words, which strongly prove his supreme deity, does he not discover himself in the course of his conversation with this woman, to have not only a clear, but *omniscient, all-seeing* knowledge of the secrets of her heart, and the transactions of her life? Does he not discover himself to her as one who has a right to say, "I am he that searcheth the hearts?" Add to this, Were he not really, and truly God, as well as man, would it not have been presumptuous in him to desire this woman to fall down before him, as a humble suppliant, asking *the living water*, or the influences of the Holy Spirit, and the blessings of salvation? Prayer is a direct and positive act of worship. It is founded on a firm persuasion

in the sinner's mind of the infinite power, sufficiency, and fulness of the person addressed, to supply all his wants and to grant the most certain relief. It cannot, without the grossest idolatry, be countenanced, or claimed by any creature, not the highest angel in glory. It is the sole right of the godhead. The inference from this train of reasoning is obvious; if you regard Jesus only as a prophet, "as an upper servant in the kingdom of heaven," as a distinguished martyr, as the head and chief of the creation; and not, at the same time, connect with these views of his character, that he is the true, the only wise God, our Saviour; that he is the searcher of hearts, the object of faith, of love, of worship, and prayer; you are still as ignorant of his real glory and dignity, as was his poor woman at Jacob's well. You know as little about him as she did, when she saw him fatigued with his journey and asking a draught of refreshing water.

To know God and the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, is life eternal. It is a proper view of his godhead that places his humiliation in the most astonishing point of view. It is this that gives efficacy and virtue to his sufferings; that adds weight and merit to his obedience; and creates confidence and an unshaken dependence of the soul upon him. Who would dare to trust in a mere man, in the face of such an awful curse, as we find in the word of God: "Cursed is he that trusteth in the arm of flesh?" Who would dare to pray to, or ask any blessing from him, who was no more than a prophet, or a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief? Would not this be laying the foundation, with a witness, of creature worship and the most impious idolatry. If you know him not, therefore, as one in whom the fulness of the godhead dwelleth bodily; if you do not pay him divine honour and worship, and not only pray in his name to the Father of mercies, but call to him as God your Saviour; "if you do not call
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"upon the name of the Lord Jesus" in the same feeling and earnest manner that Stephen, a dying martyr, did, when he gave up the ghost: *Lord Jesus receive my spirit*, you are ignorant of an essential part of the character of Christ. "He hears the poor" when he crieth, the needy and him that hath no "helper." You are to know him and confide in him as God over all and blessed for ever. The heart must be well established in this truth, if we would derive comfort from the gospel, or make the scriptures consistent with themselves.

Christ is *the gift of God* here meant—the unspeakable gift of heaven; and if we rob him of his divine perfections, and strip him of his godhead, we lessen, nay, I had almost said, annihilate the infinite value of such a gift; we betray our aversion to, and ignorance of this great fundamental truth of the gospel, "For this is the true God and eternal life." Is his obedience to be considered in no higher point of light than the obedience of a Noah, of an Abraham, of a Job, of a Daniel, or of an angel? And if the fulness of the godhead dwell not in him, if he be not the true God, his obedience cannot be viewed in a more honourable way. Does his blood possess no more virtue than the blood of bulls and of goats; than the blood of a common suffering martyr? Is this the light in which the sacrificial types of the Old Testament dispensation place his sufferings and death? Is this all the virtue the prophets or apostles ascribe to it, when they tell us, that he was cut off to put an end to sin, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness? when they tell us he was wounded for our transgressions, when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree? Did the apostles view either his obedience or death in this trifling, insignificant light? If so, why does their language warm as often as they recall his obedience and death to mind? Why are their hearts filled with holy wonder and admiration? Why do they express themselves so strongly, so feelingly on

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subject which some imagine contains nothing so extraordinary or marvellous. "O the depth of the knowledge and riches of Christ. O the height, and depth, and breadth, and length of the love of God; it passeth knowledge. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God. Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh, seen of angels, justified in the Spirit, preached to the Gentiles believed on in the world, and received up into glory." Have you similar adoring thoughts of the character, obedience, and death of the great Redeemer? Encouraged by his own words, may you not go, and with earnestness ask him to give you this living water. He will undoubtedly hear and grant you all your requests.

S E R M O N IX.

JOHN iv. 10.

Jesus said, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

FEW passages, in the history of our Lord's life, are more striking and instructive than this, which forms the ground of our present subject. The interview between the Messiah and the woman of Samaria, is not only affecting, but calculated to convey many edifying and important lessons for our improvement in divine knowledge. In order to illustrate the words of our text, I proposed, First, To make a few general remarks on the whole of the history before us; and, secondly, To shew what particular truths may be derived from the words we have read.

From this history, we remarked that providence, in the most gracious manner, arranges and disposes all the unexpected and unforeseen circumstances that pave the way for the humble and cordial return of the soul to God; and that Jesus, our gracious Redeemer,

redeemer, prevents us with his love, and employs persevering pains and labour to secure an interest in our affections, and to gain a complete conquest over our hearts. We farther remarked, that when Christ is discovered by the believing soul, as the searcher of hearts, as the Messiah who knoweth all things, and who alone can give life to our souls, we feel an ardent desire to enjoy his favour; and, at the same time, are cordially disposed to use every endeavour to bring others to entertain the same exalted sentiments of the Saviour with ourselves; that such is the love of Christ to sinners, as no degrees of guilt, no impediments can obstruct its progress, or prevent its effects. And, lastly, that Christ never asked any thing from a sinner, without an intention of returning an hundred fold.

I proceeded, in the second place, to illustrate those truths that may, in a particular manner, be derived from the words of the text: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." In last discourse, I only observed, on this part of the subject, that a true and proper knowledge of Christ is absolutely necessary to salvation; and that ignorance of his divine and personal glory is most ruinous to the souls of men. Let it now be further observed,

II. That, another truth derived from this passage, is, that all the blessings of salvation are to be considered as "the gift of God.—If thou knewest *the gift of God*, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

Jesus Christ himself is the unspeakable gift of God, and is the pledge and security of all other gifts, blessings, and privileges of that covenant, which is well ordered in all things and sure. It is pride of heart, the vilest presumption, joined to the grossest ignorance

rance of the word of God, that could ever have led men to suppose, that their most perfect obedience, much less their defective services could have merited the kingdom of glory. We are every where taught in scripture, to view the Saviour's humiliation, sufferings and death, as the meritorious cause, as the best charter we can have for the blessings of the gospel. Indeed, were the possession of these blessings suspended on our defective obedience, or imperfect services; and in this light they must ever be viewed, when contrasted with the pure and spiritual nature of the divine law; how gloomy our prospect, how faint and fluctuating our hopes of ever obtaining and enjoying these blessings! But the moment we suspend them on the infinitely meritorious obedience of the Son of God, "who is the end of the law to every one that believeth on him," our hopes of acceptance with God, and of eternal life, rest, on an immovable rock. In this view of the subject, the Christian feels comfort, love, gratitude, obedience, and dependence springing up in his soul, as sources of the purest felicity—sources of joy that are the inseparable effects of repentance towards God and of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

To put this matter beyond all doubt—"that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his grace he hath saved us," let us consider man in two views—as a believer and an unbeliever; and the obedience which he gives to the divine law in each of these characters. The obedience, which we give to the divine law, in a state of unbelief, will be allowed to be very defective and insufficient to justify us before God; for no part of it proceeds from those holy and divine principles, which his Spirit has pointed out in the gospel as essentially necessary to a well grounded hope in Christ Jesus, that our services are acceptable in his sight. Is not faith wanting? Are not the love and fear of God unfelt in the soul? Whatever be the outward appearance of the actions

actions we perform, do they spring from the principles of the gospel, or do they come up to the demands of a holy law? The apostle gives a true account of all obedience performed by unbelievers: "For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." Rom. iii. 10—18. To suppose the law of God to come down in its demands, to stoop to the follies and vices of men; or that God, as the holy and just governor of the world, will accept of defective obedience, performed from mean and selfish principles, are equally repugnant to scripture. "Christ came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. Heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one iota of the law pass away, till all be fulfilled. Will not the judge of all the earth do that which is right? By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified."

Let us next view man, as a believer in the gospel, and we shall find it equally true, that all the blessings of salvation are the free gift of God, and not the wages of our personal obedience.

Has the Christian received power from God to believe in the name of Jesus? Has he received the gift of faith, and, in consequence of this divine principle, is he enabled to bring forth much fruit, to the praise and glory of God? If the principles and power by which every act of obedience is performed, be the gift of God, on scripture ground then we may conclude, that the fruit, or effects, of these are not the procuring cause of the blessings of salvation. Besides, no works, even after conversion, owing to remaining corruption in the heart, can come up to the spirit of the law of God, which is holy, just, and good. If we are to seek salvation this way, we must keep all the commandments, without the least failure in thought, word, or deed. Is there a child of God, who knows he must be more fruitful than others, and feels the strongest desire to live in obedience to the

gospel, that would wish to rest his hopes of eternal life on this ground? I believe not. He will not pretend to be a more eminent saint than an Abel, a Noah, an Abraham, a Jacob, Job, Daniel, and others whose lives are recorded in scripture. And if they were saved by faith in the blood of Jesus, and received the mercies of salvation as the gift of God, he must receive them in the same way, if ever with these worthies he would wish to inherit eternal life. But while I would, with a due particularity, guard you against trusting to your obedience, or your works, as your saviour, either before or after you have believed in Jesus, I would urge Christians, as they regard the honour of their Redeemer, and the glory and success of the gospel, "to have their fruit unto holiness, that their end may be everlasting life." Obedience, when performed from gospel principles, and directed to a right end, that is, the glory of God, is an essential link in the chain of salvation, is a rich source of comfort to our own hearts, and exceedingly profitable to the church of Christ, and the world that lieth in wickedness. The more that the temper and spirit of the gospel grows up in your hearts, the more humbling sense of your own unworthiness will you feel, which will lead you daily to a throne of grace, like the publican, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

3. Another truth, derived from these words, is a firm persuasion that Jesus is both able and willing to save. "Thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water." It is of importance, that the believer should be fully persuaded of this truth. Indeed, till it be deeply impressed on his heart, he can have little peace and comfort in drawing nigh to the footstool of divine mercy. A sense of guilt often returns on the soul; it damps our hopes and destroys our confidence in God. It is only a firm belief of the willingness of the Saviour to receive and to pardon the chief of sinners, that

an scatter our fears, remove our doubts, and impart holy courage and boldness in all our approaches to the throne of grace. Jesus, who made the heart, knows the fears of the heart; he knows the most ready way to conquer them, and to establish the mind in peace. Here I might desire you to reflect on his amazing humiliation; on all the cruel train of sufferings he underwent; on the tears he shed; on the death he endured; on the intreaties he used; on the invitations he gave to the chief of sinners; to flee from the wrath to come. Why are we informed that his delights were early with men, in the habitable parts of the earth? Why do we hear Jehovah confirming his mercy, in the solemn form of an oath, that he hath no pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they should turn and live? Why is his covenant well ordered in all things and sure? Why did Jesus propose and offer himself so repeatedly in the gospel history to be despised, and save the most worthless and abandoned sinners? Why do we see publicans, and harlots, and transgressors of the first magnitude, (for the woman of Samaria stands not alone on the records of mercy), distinguished for guilt, invited to come to Christ? Are not all these circumstances designed to impart strong consolation, by displaying before our eyes how willing and ready the Saviour is to pluck us as brands from the burning? None ever came to him as lost and perishing sinners, but he embraced them in the arms of his mercy. None ever supplicated his pardon, as weary and heavy laden, but he gave them rest. None ever thirsted for the blessings of his purchase, but to them he opened the fountain of living water. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit." Another truth, derived from this text, is, that the blessings of salvation are with great propriety compared to water—*living water*.

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This is a very frequent metaphor, or comparison in the scriptures. A well of living water is used in the song of Solomon and by the prophet Isaiah, xiii. 3. to denote the fulness, excellency and durability of the salvation of Christ. A cistern, pond, or stream may be soon dried up; but the idea of a well of living, springing water, suggests to us continued fulness and plenty. In Peter's second epistle we read of "wells without water," that is, nominal Christians without the spirit and power of religion. Well may the gospel itself and its author be compared to living water. He has the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him; "he is full of grace and truth." Multitudes have derived from his fulness grace upon grace, and yet it remains unexhausted and undiminished. The blessings the gospel confers are not scanty and penurious; they are full, powerful and extensive in their effects on the soul of every one who is made a partaker of them. None who ever desired to possess them, have found them to deceive their wishes or disappoint their hopes. Jesus was never known to send the hungry, the thirsty soul from this living water empty away. How simple, yet striking, are the comparisons of scripture! We all know that water is a necessary mean of animal life. Without this element we could not be supported. Can our souls live before God without that pardon which his mercy imparts? Without drinking the waters of the sanctuary which, wherever they come, give life, can we make progress heavenward? Salvation by Christ from the guilt, the love, and power of sin, is no less necessary for the life and comfort of our souls, than water for the comfort and support of our bodies. Is it not a proper view of the gospel, which, by affecting our hearts, makes us cheerful, lively, and active? Do not the divine influences, communicated to our souls, revive and quicken us in the way of life? Do they not comfort our hearts, and build us up in our most holy faith? Could the life of God in our souls be maintained and supported

supported for one day without this living water? Could it be preserved or secured for a moment, if Christ, the living fountain, were not liberally to send forth fresh and invigorating streams?

But the gospel is not only full in its blessings and necessary to the comfort of our souls, like water, it is a great mean of making us fruitful in holiness. What is it that makes the grass to grow, which covers the mountains with verdure; what is it that makes the corn to spring, which fills the valleys with plenty? Is it not the falling shower? Is it not the dropping dew? Christians, may I not, in like manner, ask, what is the great mean of promoting the peaceable fruits of righteousness? When did you begin to have your fruit unto holiness? Was it not when the doctrines of the gospel began to distil upon your souls as the dew of heaven upon the tender herb? Was it not when the influences of the spirit began to drop as the rain; to come down as showers that water the earth? These no sooner descended than you grew up as tender plants in the vineyard of the Lord? No more as cumberers of the ground, you grow up as willows by the water courses. You became as trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth your fruit in due season.

Need I stop to take notice of another circumstance, a point of resemblance that must strike every attentive mind; and that is the purifying and cleansing nature of living water. Is it not the element we employ to cleanse any polluted or filthy body? It is used as a striking type under the law to point out purity of heart and of conscience? The priests and Levites had their bodies washed with pure water, to signify the inward purity of soul with which they could draw near to God. In allusion to this property of water, the Psalmist says; "Wash me and I shall be clean; cleanse, sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be whiter than the snow." In New Testament language, do we not read of the washing
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of regeneration; of the blood of Christ cleansing from all sin. What water is to the washing away the filth of the body; so is the blood of Christ to the purifying the heart and life from sin.

Again you will observe, our Lord calls the blessings of salvation and the influences of the spirit living waters; and in the 15. verse tells us they shall spring unto everlasting life. These epithets are expressive of the durable nature of gospel blessings. Standing waters are soon dried up by the scorching heat of the sun, or they are soon corrupted and become noxious to the powers of animal life, and destructive to the health of the body. In opposition to these qualities the water which our Saviour offers is living and everlasting. It is like himself, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. All the blessings of his purchase are everlasting and inexhaustible. The woman of Samaria drank out of the well that existed in Jacob's days; she also tasted of the same salvation which made Jacob happy. "The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever, from generation to generation." Those who lived in the old world, and those who live in the new; those who lived under the law, and those who live under the gospel, shall be made equally partakers of the grace. To teach us how durable, full and inexhaustible the mercies of our Redeemer are, we read of the living fountains of water refreshing the redeemed in heaven. John saw a river of pure water proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. The Prophet Isaiah li. 6. gives a lofty and sublime description of the durable nature of gospel blessings, which accords well with this description given by the apostle. "Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in the same manner; but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." All that we

ld; all that has ever adorned the heavens, or beautified the earth, shall vanish away; but those spiritual comforts, purchased and bestowed on sinners by Christ, held forth to us under the emblem of *living water*, shall never perish nor decay. Like our souls, they shall live for ever; like heaven itself, and the throne of God and of the Lamb, they shall be everlasting.

I now proceed to the practical improvement of this subject.

1. Hence we may see how consolatory the doctrines of the gospel are to true believers. As water, living water, has a power of refreshing the body; so have the blessings of the gospel a peculiar and divine power of refreshing the heart. Can we review the humiliation of Christ; his unwearied attentions to the greatest interests of men; his condescending manner; the earnestness he discovered in opening the eyes of sinners; the simplicity he shewed in pressing home on their consciences the things that belong to their peace; the life he led; the obedience he gave; and the death he suffered in our room and stead; the blessings that are bestowed upon us in time and through eternity: I say, can we survey all these, and not feel a peace, a comfort, a joy in our hearts that begetteth knowledge: while the gospel enlightens the understandings of men, it thus conveys the most perfect satisfaction to the heart.

2. From what has been said, we may learn how much we are encouraged to pour out our hearts in prayer before God. "The Lord waits to be gracious. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up unto the death for us all; how will he not, with him, freely give us all things." We may now come boldly to the throne of grace, and ask assistance to help us in every time of need, without any dread of a refusal. We may, with a holy confidence, ask the living water, and every other mercy: God

God will not turn a deaf ear. Our great advantage with the Father will present our petitions, and shall be heard. "For if we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children; how much more will he give the holy Spirit to them that ask him. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. Do you put a high value on God's unspeakable gift of the living water, shew your esteem of these gifts by praying earnestly for them.

3. Was this woman filled with surprise, when Jesus, who was a Jew, conversed with her in so friendly a manner. With what holy wonder should we be filled, while we think of his condescension in the whole of his mediatorial work! Did he not think it no robbery to be equal with God; was he not the express image of his person; the brightness of his Father's glory; visit our world; converse with the chief of sinners; bleed and die for them, that they might reign with him in glory? Well may the world of sinners be astonished indeed! The more we think on this subject, we are lost, in wonder, love, and praise. Angels look into it and stand in silent and awful wonder; They bend from their throne to see the deep humiliation of him whom they worship and obey! Well may we say: "Will God ever very deed dwell with man on the earth! Who can say, O Lord! that thou shouldst visit him, or that thou shouldst be so kind to him? Should all the princes of the earth, should all the angels in heaven deign to visit you, the honour would be nothing in comparison of what God has done for you, in sending the Son of his love, the heir of all things, into the world, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life.

4. Does God over-rule the events of Providence to establish the kingdom of grace in your souls? learn then to be wise, and religious observers of his providence. Every mercy has a tongue that speaks

the child of God who receives it; every event of providence has a voice that addresses the heart of the hearer. Mark the providential circumstances in the story of the woman of Samaria: each of you has to review your own history, and to see the same God ordering all things well that concern you—inviting you to himself. When providence alarms your conscience, hearken to its sacred voice. When providence throws this or that good advice in your way, is it not a call to you to listen and follow its direction? When this or that friend is raised up by heaven to instruct and encourage you in the way of salvation, will you be so blind as not to see the love of God in it? When this or that message is sent home to your heart, in hearing the word, in attending on the ordinances of religion, do you not feel the power, and acknowledge the authority of God in it? Does not the gospel, like its author, still continue to call you all that ever you did against God? It is your duty to hearken to its voice, as the voice of God. When God, in the course of his providence, sends you this or that mercy, this or that affliction, does it not mean to bring your hearts nearer to himself? Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord." *Matthew 23:37*

5. How lamentable is it, to think that so many should be grossly ignorant about the Lord Jesus Christ! They worship, they know not what; living in sin, which hardens the heart, they are careless and unconcerned about the Redeemer of the world. They give themselves no trouble about the Saviour—the one thing needful; about the true happiness of their souls; or the concerns of eternity. Look around you, and is it not to be feared, that you will find many, like the woman of Samaria, living in sin, without God, and without hope in the world; as ignorant of the character of Christ and the salvation he brings? Are there not thousands, surrounded with the light of the gospel, and having the bible in their

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hands, who know not what the gift of God meaneth, or who it is that can give them living water; and never till this moment have bowed the knee, opened the lips, to pray for such heavenly blessings. These are the persons that stand in real need of our prayers; these are more the objects of our pity, than the inhabitants of a bedlam. "O God! open their eyes, that they may see the marvellous things that thy law. O shew them the glory and power of that Saviour, who came to seek and to save that which are lost! O bend their hearts to thy sovereignty, authority, and make them a willing people in the day of thy power!" Parents, have you any children, ignorant of him who is the gift of God; is it not your duty to instruct them, and to water their instructions with your family and secret prayers? Are not the vows of God upon you, to lead them by your example, authority, and precepts to the living water—to the fountain of life? Christians! have you any friend, relation, or servant apparently dead in trespasses and sins, still stout-hearted and far from righteousness, and can you be easy while they remain in such a state? Have you for yourselves tasted that the Lord is gracious, and is it possible for you to remain unconcerned about the salvation of others? Will you not pity, and pray for a multitude that have not the fear of God before their eyes? See what persevering pains and patience the Saviour discovered with an ignorant and froward sinner. Go thou, Christian! and do likewise. You know not, but God may honour you with winning souls, and turning this or that friend, this or that neighbour to righteousness—to the wisdom of the just.

6. Hence we may see the miserable state and condition of fallen man. Ignorance of God, and the way of salvation, is an awful part of this wretchedness. The sinner would never seek God, if God were not determined to seek and to recover him, by his preventing mercy. If you estimate the miser-

of man, by the infinite value of the gift bestowed, it must be immense indeed ! Could our misery be removed by no other arm but the arm of Jesus ? Was our poverty so great, that nothing but the unsearchable riches of Christ could relieve us ? Was our need so urgent, that, without the gift of God, we must perish ? Could nothing less than living water wash away our moral guilt and defilement ? Hence we may learn our awful state in consequence of the fall. Hence we may see what reason we have for the deepest humility, and the warmest gratitude to God for such a gift, every way suited to all our wants. " Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. We are not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which thou hast showed unto thy servant." Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within within me, bless his holy name."

7. Is the gift of God of so high value, and does it not become you to live and walk worthy of such a gift ? Let me ask for what purposes do you really think God bestowed upon you such a gift, as the Lord Jesus Christ ? Was it, that you might remain in a state of ignorance, guilt, death and danger ? Was it that you might live in sin, making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof ? The most abandoned will not be hardy enough to assert this ? Was not this gift bestowed, was not this living water given, was not the gospel revealed against all unrighteousness of men ? Do not these call us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world ? Why do the dews of heaven descend ? Is it not that the fields may become more fruitful ? Why does the living water proceed from the throne of God and of the Lamb ? Is it not that we may be adorned with the fruits of the spirit ? If you know the gift of God ; if you have tasted the living water ; live in the world so as to honour the giver, by having a conversation such as

becometh the gospel—by adorning the doctrine of God your Saviour, in all things.

8. May I not conclude, with an exhortation to sinners, who are still strangers to the grace of Christ? You are in a guilty and ignorant state; you know not the guilt you are daily accumulating; you are living in sin, in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; you do not find this state, at all times a pleasant one. How can it? It is a state of rebellion against God, against your own consciences, against your true happiness! It is a state of death! If you live and die in it, you must perish. Without the knowledge of Christ, and an interest in him, you can never enjoy the favour of God, which is life; you can never possess his loving kindness, which is better than life. God is employing many means in the course of his providence, to alarm you, to rouse you to serious consideration, to fix your heart on him, as its abiding portion. What are you doing? Are you labouring to defeat them all; to stifle your convictions; to condemn the authority of his word; and to turn a deaf ear to the voice of his mercies and providences; and do you think you will be able to brave it out with the Almighty? Fatal mistake! Dreadful delusion! You must perish, if you thus continue to despise the unspeakable gift of heaven; if you continue to do despite unto the Spirit of grace. Death is in every thought you think; death is in every step you take; eternal death is in every work or action, you perform.

9. Let me, in the last place, hold out to your view, the durable nature of those blessings the gospel confers on the believing and returning sinner. All the pursuits, possessions, and enjoyments which this world can give, are they not short-lived and unsatisfactory? This cannot be said of the blessings of the gospel: The longer they are enjoyed, the more satisfaction do they impart. Like living water, they spring up

in our souls unto everlasting life. They comfort the soul in time ; they support it at death ; and they will be a source of joy through endless ages. Fix your attention on any one object, on any one earthly enjoyment ; and say, either from your own experience, or the experience of others, how soon may you be robbed of it ? But no period in time, or eternity can arrive, that will be able to rob you of your God as your portion ; of the gift of heaven, as your all.

SERMON X.

ISAIAH lxvi. 2.

—But to this man will I look, that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

THIS chapter consists of two parts. In the first, God rebukes the hypocritical worshippers among the Jews, who imagined that he would be satisfied with mere external performances, which neither affected nor improved their hearts. In the third verse, he declares his contempt of such worship. He rejects it as an abomination, and threatens to punish them with strong delusions. These hypocrites thought that the presence of God was confined to the temple at Jerusalem; and that he required no more homage but the bare sacrifices commanded in the law. In order to destroy these false and contracted views of God, he declares, that "Heaven is his throne," the peculiar place where his power, glory, and majesty were displayed in the fullest manner. He tells them, "The earth is his footstool." He leaves them to reflect, how vain it was to think that his presence could be confined to the temple, which was but a very small part of the earth. He leaves them

them to think, from the description he gives of himself, in the first verse, of how little value must the temple appear in his eye; how little advantage he could derive from the most costly sacrifices offered there, while they had no effect on the moral temper, principles, or conduct of those who presented them: While they lost sight of the grand object, which the temple itself, and all its sacrifices were designed to prefigure and point out; while they were uninfluenced by faith, in the expected and promised Messiah; while they continued in their sins, proud in heart, and far from God; insensible to that contrition of spirit which a believing view of Christ and him crucified ever inspires; he rejects their oblations as impious and unmeaning: he tells them, by his prophet, that he will view that man only with a favourable eye, as a devout worshipper, who is touched with contrition of spirit; who is clothed with humility; who has a heart tenderly affected with the power and authority of his word; not resting merely in the form, but who feels the power of godliness. "But to this man will I look, that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

In discoursing from this passage, I shall, in the first place, show what is implied in the character here described.

In the second place, illustrate the privilege here promised: "To this man will I look." And then apply the subject.

I. In the first place, I shall shew what is implied in the character here described.

1. He who is poor and of a contrite spirit, has been favoured with heart-affecting views of the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus—with comfortable discoveries of his rich and sovereign mercy. The first thing that humbles any sinner, that makes him poor and of a contrite spirit, is a commanding view of

of the majesty and sovereignty of God. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear," says Job, "but now mine eyes have seen thee; therefore I have humbled myself and repent in dust and in ashes. Who is he that can hide himself from the face of him that is called upon him? says the prophet Isaiah, "for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts. My flesh trembleth for the fear of thee," said the Psalmist, "and I am afraid of thy judgements." Whenever the Spirit, the Word, or Providence of God give us right views of the nature and perfections of Jehovah, of his glory and sovereignty, as they shine forth in the work of redemption, we become poor and of a contrite spirit. It is then we begin to tremble at his word, to stand in awe of his judgements, to be deeply affected with a sense of his mercy, and to act agreeably to his holy will. All true religion hath its firm foundations in the right, and saving discoveries of the divine nature, of the divine mercy, as it is exhibited to us in the gospel. These soften our hard hearts, bring down the pride of our souls, and lay us, as humble supplicants, at the foot of the cross. These make us careful to avoid every thing that may offend or provoke the divine jealousy against us.

2. He who is poor and of a contrite spirit, has not only got saving discoveries of the nature of God, but he has got right and saving discoveries of himself. He has been made to see, in a convincing light, his own emptiness, his own vileness and insufficiency for any thing that is spiritually good. He has, in a particular manner, obtained an affecting sight of sin, in its dreadful nature and ruinous consequences. He sees it to be that evil and abominable thing which God hateth; he sees his own sins in particular, attended with many aggravating circumstances; he sees how vile and abominable sin has made him in the sight of a holy God; he lays his hand on his mouth, and his mouth in the dust, and cries, "Unclean, unclean, God be merciful to me a sinner!" This is

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the earnest and daily prayer of his soul. When our eyes are once opened to see how ruinous, how vile, how degrading sin is to our souls and bodies, and at the same time, how insufficient we are to do any thing to remove its guilt, or destroy its power; how low in the dust do we lie before God; how poor and contrite in spirit do we become! Clothed with humility, we come to the word of God, and see our sinful hearts described and laid open; we come to the cross which God hath erected; we see the bleeding sacrifice upon it; we acknowledge our need of such a Saviour, of such a salvation: we believe we are sinners; we begin to hope we shall be saved.

3. He who is poor and of a contrite spirit is weaned from a principle of self love and self dependence, and has his affections and hopes solely fixed on Immanuel, or God with us, as his Saviour. In our natural state, self is the ruling principle: it reigns and predominates in every unrenewed heart. We set up our will and inclinations in opposition to the will of God; we set up our folly in opposition to the wisdom of God; our meanness to his divine glory; and the sinful wishes and pursuits of our corrupt hearts to the unerring and unalterable judgements of God. The great end we have in living is to please, and gratify the passions of our own hearts. We know not what it is *to live to God*. His word has no authority over our minds; his Spirit is resisted; his providence disregarded, his gospel and salvation overlooked and slightly esteemed. The great concerns and hopes of eternity are seldom, or never allowed to mingle their influence with the business of this transitory state. But when the Spirit of God makes us poor and of contrite hearts, how changed our feelings, how changed our views! We desire to retain little of our own will; we desire to retain little of our own ends: it is then we begin to feel a wish to promote the honour and glory of God. A sacred regard to his authority takes possession of the throne of our hearts and

and bears the sway there. It is a very difficult work to get *self* denied, to get self pride and dependence humbled and destroyed; but difficult as this work is, it is carrying on in every soul that is poor and of a contrite spirit. *Self* is in part crucified; and if not entirely expelled, at least, its reigning influence is weakened. Love to God, as our Redeemer, occupies the throne of the heart, and becomes a ruling and commanding principle. "My soul," said the Psalmist, "is as a weaned child." You all know how humble, how self-denied, how submissive to the will of the parent, a weaned child is; it has no ends in view, no will, no wish different from that of its parent. This is a simple but striking picture of a self-denied spirit, which every humble servant of God must, and will possess. He, who is poor, is weaned from himself; he aims at nothing, he desires nothing so much as to promote, and advance the divine glory. "Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he doth, he doth all with a view to the glory of God."

4. He, who is poor and of a contrite spirit, is enabled by the grace of God to maintain a deep and serious sense of his spiritual wants. Is not a poor beggar continually telling you of his wants; that he hath nothing to help, or relieve him; and that he is at the point of starving? Poverty, in common life, is the same thing as a state of want. It is exactly so with him who is poor and of a contrite spirit. He is ever sensible of his needy and destitute condition. He does not view himself as rich, and increased in goods, and standing in need of nothing. "He believes himself to be poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked, and standing in need of every thing." Were you to hear him in the moments of retirement, when the world is shut out, and he is addressing himself to his God, how fervent and earnest are his complaints and petitions! "Lord, I want a heart more broken, and humble on account of sin. I want a more thankful heart; I want a more re-

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signed heart; I want a more pure heart; I want a more obedient heart; I want a heart more affected with a sense of redeeming love." What a vast difference is there between the hypocrite, and a child of God. The hypocrite, full of pride, is ever telling you what he hath; he is ever boasting that he is not like other men: but a child of God is telling you what he wants. The one is glad he is so good; the other is grieved to the heart he is so bad. If we are insensible of our spiritual wants, and strangers to a spirit of prayer, we know nothing about the character described in the text. For wherever poverty of spirit exists, it always gives rise to a feeling sense of our spiritual wants; and this again gives rise to a holy importunity and fervency in prayer. We have a readiness, we feel a happiness which we sometimes are at a loss to express, when we draw near to the footstool of mercy; and, as destitute creatures, travel between our own emptiness and the fulness that is in God.

5. He, who is poor and of a contrite spirit, has high and admiring thoughts of Christ as the Redeemer. He sees himself to be a guilty, polluted creature, without God and without hope in the world. Convinced of his lost and undone estate by nature, he flies to Christ for pardon. He sees himself naked, and he flies to Christ that he may be covered with the garments of salvation; he sees himself diseased and he flies to Christ that he may be healed; he sees himself wounded and he flies to Christ that he may be cured; he sees himself in a state of death: and O how precious, in such circumstances, is Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life! He sees all his hopes and riches treasured up in God his Saviour—the riches of wisdom, of righteousness, sanctification and redemption. He sets a high value on this Prince and Saviour. His heart is filled with holy wonder and admiration: as he contemplates his excellences and perfections, he stands amazed at the height and depth, at the breadth and length of the love of God, that passeth

passeth knowledge. He esteems him as altogether lovely; as the chief among ten thousand; as the delight and joy of his heart. To them that believe he is and ever will be precious. "I sleep securely," (saith an eminent father,) "in the bosom of Christ; and "when I view his excellence and worth, I rest without dismay." The believing soul is ever ready to set the crown of salvation on the head of his Saviour, and to acknowledge that the grace of the Lord was exceeding abundant towards him. A criminal, who lies under a sentence which the laws of his country have pronounced, and which will soon bring him to an untimely end; if he should receive a pardon from his sovereign, how would he proclaim aloud his goodness and clemency! What admiring thoughts would he not entertain of him, who restored him to life and to liberty! Did you ever know a sinner, who went away from the foot of the cross with a pardon from the Prince of Life, sealed on his conscience sprinkled with the blood of Jesus; without having his heart penetrated with a sense of divine clemency? Did you ever see one restored to spiritual life and liberty, without entertaining the highest admiration and expressing the warmest gratitude to him, "who pardoneth all his iniquities and who crowneth him with loving kindnesses and tender mercies?"

6. He, who is poor and of a contrite spirit, is careful in maintaining a tender, watchful frame of soul; he is sensible of the many dangers to which he is exposed; he is afraid of the temptations of Satan and the world; he often trembles at the treachery and deceitfulness of his own heart. He knows, because he has often felt it, how deceitful and desperately wicked this is! It is these views of himself, and of his spiritual enemies that will dispose him to fear always; to keep his heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. In every place and on every occasion, he will exercise a holy jealousy and circumspection over himself. He will be scrupulous in guarding

guarding against those sins that expose him to the threatenings of the divine law, or obstruct the accomplishment of the promises of his God. He will, therefore, tremble to act inconsistently with the word of God, or the examples of holiness therein contained. The fear of the Lord will be as a ruling principle in his heart. He will set the Lord continually before him. He will walk circumspectly, not as a fool, but as wise, redeeming the time. He will watch and pray that he enter not into temptation. He will watch and be sober unto the end. He will take heed lest there should be in him at any time an evil heart of unbelief, in making him depart from the living God. I come now,

II. In the second place, to shew what is implied in the privilege here promised: "To this man will I look."

1. When God is said to look to any one, it supposes that he is reconciled to him through Christ Jesus. When God would express his anger against a people, he says, by the mouth of his prophet Jeremiah, xviii. 17. "I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity." Similar is the language of the prophet Ezek. xxxix. 23. when he would represent the indignation of the Lord: "I hid my face from them, and gave them into the hands of their enemies; so fell they all by the sword." When God is said, therefore, to look to any one, it must mean the reverse of what is suggested in the passages above: it must imply, that he is in a state of friendship and love with the persons, upon whom he fixes his gracious look. It must suppose that he is reconciled to them, that he is their friend and Saviour. While sinners remain in their rebellious and impenitent state, they cannot entertain the most distant hopes of enjoying one gracious look of heaven. God is said to be "angry with the wicked every day." While in a guilty state, they

are children of wrath, exposed to all the curses of a broken law. God indeed, in one sense, beholds all his works. "He looks down from heaven, his habitation, and beholds the things that are done on earth." But with what a different aspect does he behold the righteous and the wicked. He looks upon the one with a frown of indignation; he looks upon the other with the smiles of redeeming love. None can enjoy this privilege, till they are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Whenever he fixes a look of complacency and delight on the sinner, this plainly supposes that he is at peace with him; that all his sins, and all the curses of a broken law are laid to the account of the Almighty Redeemer. God is no longer his enemy, but his friend; he will be tender of him; he will every day give him fresh instances of his goodness and mercy. No sooner is a sinner converted to God, but he enjoys this look of friendship and love; God takes special notice of him, and supplies all his necessary wants. "He hath looked down," says David, "from the height of his sanctuary: from heaven did the Lord behold the earth. To hear the groaning of the prisoner, to loose those that are appointed unto death." Though the glorious Lord hath his throne in heaven, as one paraphraseth these words, though celestial hosts surround that throne, and never cease to praise the king of kings, who sitteth upon it; though eternal hallelujahs ascend from the tongues of cherubic and seraphic legions; yet through all the dazzling armies of heaven, through all the principalities and powers of the upper world, the Lord look with approbation and delight, to him that is poor in spirit, humble, penitent, self-abased. God looks not to the great, the noble, the wise and learned; to the proud Pharisee, or the self-righteous moralist: No; "but to this man will I look," says he, "to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." You know, in common life, when you look upon a person and converse

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with him in a friendly manner, it is a token that you are on the best terms with him: whereas, if you turn your back upon him, it is always considered as a mark of your neglect and aversion. The spirit of God, in condescension to our finite nature, uses the language, terms, and ideas, with which we are most conversant, and familiarly acquainted. When he looks to us, it supposes that he is our friend, that his grace is smiling upon us, and that his providence is making all things work together for our good; it is a comfortable, a substantial token of his heavenly regard. And this suggests the

2. Second thing included in this privilege: It implies that God will exercise a peculiar care and concern about his people. When he is said to look to the man that is poor and of a contrite spirit, it imports that he much regards him; that he makes all things work together for his good; and that he will afford him every necessary and refreshing cordial in his pilgrimage state. In common life, when we are said to look to any person, we mean that we pay particular attention to his safety, prosperity, and happiness. In like manner, the expression in the text leads us to believe and trust that God will pay particular attention and care to our every wish, interest, and concern. In whatever state, or circumstances, the Christian may be placed, he has a providence that will regard him, he has a Redeemer that will befriend him. Is he afraid of his spiritual enemies; God assures him that he will give him the victory in all things. Is he afraid of sin and guilt; God is not inattentive to the state of his mind; he leads him, in a comfortable manner, to the peace-speaking blood of Jesus, that cleanseth from all sin. Is he dejected, and does he tremble at the thoughts of everlasting wrath; God sees his fears and pities his distress. He informs him, that he hath laid his help on one that is mighty to save from going down to the pit. Is he in fear, and involved in doubt, as to his meetness for the in-

heritance of the saints; God will graciously scatter
 the clouds, and give him to see that his name is co-
 rolled among the children of the kingdom. Is he af-
 flicted; God shews him how tenderly he looks to
 him and regards him: for in all his afflictions, he is
 afflicted. In whatever condition his people may be,
 God keeps them as the apple of his eye. The con-
 cern that God takes of them is a sympathetic and
 compassionate concern. When Ephraim was be-
 moaning himself, how affectionately did the Lord
 look upon him, how much was he concerned for
 him! He sees the state and condition of his people;
 he sees all their wants and necessities, and accordingly
 he sheweth mercy. Such of you as have been hum-
 bled under the mighty hand of God, as have been
 made poor and of a contrite spirit, may rejoice in tri-
 bulations; under all your griefs and sorrows, you
 may be of good cheer; for you have the affectionate
 look of a gracious God ever directed towards you. He
 who looked upon the children of Israel, when groa-
 ing under Egyptian bondage, and granted deliverance,
 will have respect to his people, when groaning under
 the spiritual burdens of sin and guilt, or under any
 other sorrow. "As a father pitieth his children, so
 " the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He healeth
 " the broken in heart, he bindeth up their wounds."
 You have only to read, with attention, our Lord's
 consolatory prayer, in the seventeenth chapter of
 John's gospel, to see the concern and interest which
 he takes in the welfare and prosperity of his people,
 when he looks to them in this world. "Holy Father,"
 says the blessed Jesus, "keep, through thine own
 " name, those whom thou hast given me, that they
 " may be one as we are one. I pray not that thou
 " shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou
 " shouldest keep them from the evil. Father, I will
 " that they also whom thou hast given me be with
 " me where I am; that they may behold my glory."
 In order to convince us how God looks to, or regards
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the interests of his people, you have here the Saviour pouring out his soul in fervent prayer to his Father, for their spiritual safety and happiness. In this manner does God look to his people so as to comfort, protect and defend them.

3. When God is said to look to the man that is poor and of a contrite spirit, it implies that he will furnish him with fresh supplies of grace and assistance, suited to his present case and circumstances. A virtuous woman is described by Solomon, in the book of Proverbs, in the following terms: "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." How does a prudent and religious head of a family look well to her household? Is it not by appointing every one their proper station and business in the family; providing necessary food and supplies of every thing requisite to carry on the domestic concerns in view: this is to look well to a household. When God is said to look well to his family, the church on earth, it must mean that he will take care to appoint every one his sphere of usefulness; give every one his portion of meat in due season, and furnish them with every supply of grace and assistance, necessary to carry on the important concerns of religion and eternity. God never looks, therefore, on his people, without imparting fresh supplies of grace and strength to them: he sees and knows their weakness; he sees and knows their temptations; he sees and knows their trials; he sees and knows the severer and more self-denying parts of their duty: he makes his grace therefore sufficient for them; he perfects his strength in their weakness. Hence they become strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. It is observed in the book of Judges, vii. chap. that the army of Gideon became courageous, when God looked upon them. Often do the people of God experience a similar effect in their sojourning state. A kind and favourable look hath given them victory over this and the other temptation.

when they had nothing but darkness or despair before their eyes, when they were on the point of yielding to the power of the enemy. His look, and the gracious assistance it imparted, hath kept them back from presumptuous sin, and encouraged them to the faithful performance of duty. When our Lord looked upon Zaccheus, it had this effect upon him—to change his heart, and to make him a new man. The grace and strength he was pleased then to communicate, enabled him to renounce his covetousness, to give the half of his goods to the poor, and to commence a hearty and sincere follower of Jesus.

I shall lay before you another instance, which may serve to illustrate what is meant by God's looking to his people. It is the case of Peter, when he denied his Lord. What was it that brought him to a serious sense of his sin; what was it that melted his cowardly and treacherous heart into godly sorrow; that filled his soul with pious distress and anguish? Was it not the gracious look of his divine master? Was it not the grace and strength which were then imparted, that made him ever after bold in the cause of Christ, and determined to suffer death rather than be ashamed of his gospel. The prayer of the Centurion contains the same idea: "Master, look upon my son!" that is, impart healing virtue to his body that he may recover.

What is it that gives his people still such courage and support in the hour of sorrow? What is it that gives them such delight in holy duties; such comfort of soul while they walk by the still waters, and in the green pastures of his ordinances? What is it that enables them to glorify God in their souls and bodies, which are his? What, but the affectionate look of a gracious Redeemer, inspecting the state and circumstances of his people, and suiting his grace and assistance to their various necessities.

4. When God is said to look to the man that is poor and of a contrite spirit, it implies that he takes delight

delight and pleasure in him. When you look on a friend, a parent, a child, or any beloved object, do you not feel complacency and delight in the object of your affection? When Christ is said to look to his people, it must signify and import to us that he feels the highest complacency and delight in them. They are his jewels, his crown, his glory; in their hearts and lives, he sees of the travel of his soul and is satisfied. When he invites his church, in the Song, to return, he adds the reason: "Return, return, O Shulamite, *that we may look upon thee*;" that is, that we may feel a holy complacency and joy in converse and intercourse with thee. Such delight and satisfaction hath God in his people, that he, as it were, takes care to discover it in a rich variety of instances and expressions. He delights in them above every thing his hands have made. Many are the astonishing objects and wonders in this lower world; but a more delightful object God beholds not on earth, than the man who is poor and of a contrite spirit; who has humble thoughts of himself; who entertains high and adoring thoughts of his Redeemer; whose heart bows in sweet submission to the will of God; who is seen daily acknowledging himself indebted to his mercy and grace for every thing he enjoys and performs; who is accepting pardon, peace, and glory, as the free gifts of God; looking only to the mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, for eternal life; who is daily attending on ordinances, and carrying on, by the spirit of prayer and devotion, a growing acquaintance with heaven. To such a soul, God looks with heavenly complacency and joy. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off."

I come now to apply this subject.

1. We may learn the miserable state of those, who are not sensible of their poverty, and who have never felt contrition of heart. They cannot lay claim to the promise

promise in the text. While they remain in this state, they have no ground to expect a kind and gracious look from God. They are not humbled in their own eyes, they are not grieved for their sins; nor do they tremble at the word of God. Jehovah, therefore, looks on the proud in heart, as he looked on the Egyptians, not in mercy but in anger. He may bear with them a little, till the cup of their iniquity be filled up: yet he will come, and will not tarry, and be avenged on them. If he look with such complacency to him who is poor, with what indignation must he behold the temper of mind opposite to this. The proud in heart are an abomination to the Lord. What do the histories of Pharaoh, of Hezekiah, of Haman, of Nebuchadnezzar and of Herod teach you—"that all the proud and lofty sinners in the world shall yet be as stubble before the wrath of the Lamb."

2. We may learn the happiness of those, who are poor and of a contrite spirit. They have the light of God's countenance shining upon them, which puts more substantial gladness into their hearts than all the corn and wine in the world could do. Where he smiles, there must be heaven; where he frowns, it must be hell. Many are the troubles that afflict the just, but one kind gracious look from the throne of God is more than sufficient to counterbalance all that sorrow. How happy, O Christians, your state! you have seen your guilty and sinful condition by nature; you have been convinced of the evil and danger of sin; you have been filled with holy wonder at the riches of redeeming love; you are now humbled in the dust before God; and are daily, with a spirit of gratitude, receiving fresh proofs of reconciled love. This is a state which monarchs may envy, did they know or see as angels know and see your happiness. God is looking on you; every step you take to the grave is bringing you nearer to his throne of glory.

3. Is God's looking to his people an evidence of

his reconciliation and love? Say, are you reconciled to him? Is the enmity in your hearts to his grace and salvation in part destroyed? Whether do you go from this place to night, friends or enemies to God? You have heard what love and regard are included in his looking to his people; does not this warm your breasts? Does it not dispose your hearts to love him, because he hath thus loved you first? Will you henceforth turn your eyes and hearts from God, and look upon the world, the pleasures of sense, or the streams and vanities of time, as your happiness and heaven; or are you now determined to convince all around you how firm, how warm friends you are to your God and Saviour?

4. Does God's looking upon you imply his care and concern about your best interests? What care and concern ought you, after the solemn service of this day, to show about the things of God? Various and different are the ways he takes to discover his concern about you. You will have many opportunities afforded you of showing how much you have at heart to promote his glory and advance his honour in the earth. No place, no company, no time, no day, no hour but will afford you occasions of being fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. If you discover no concern about promoting the power of religion in your families; no concern about spreading its influence in your neighbourhood, and laying out your time, your talents, gifts, influence, example and authority for the honour of his name, it is to be feared God has taken little, or no concern about you: his wrath still abideth in you. For those over whom God exercises a gracious and providential care, are always disposed to be concerned and careful about every thing which may please God.

5. Does God's looking upon you imply a regular supply of grace and assistance? It becomes you then surely to use that grace, that assistance, in his service. You should not hide your master's talent in a napkin.

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The supplies of strength, the various gifts he bestows, should be employed in showing the world, that you are not slothful in business; but, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, are laying out your Lord's money to usury; that, having received *five* talents, you are now ready to return him *ten*. You will and ought to have a peculiar heartiness in his service, a mind ready for every good word and work. Why are supplies of food and other necessities afforded to servants by the head of a family? Is it not that they may spend their time, and lay out themselves to obey the orders of their master? When Jesus affords you fresh supplies of his grace, he has no other intention, but that you should lay them out in obeying his commands—in bringing forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness; in having your hearts and lives, adorned “with love, peace, joy, long-suffering, gentleness, “goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

6. Does God's looking upon you, imply that he delights in you; how then should you delight yourselves in God, in his word, providence, works, and ordinances? You will know whether you delight in him as he delights in his people, by attending to a few plain simple marks. If you do so, you will have lively and affecting apprehensions of his excellence and worth, deeply impressed on your minds. His glory and perfections will be the habitual subjects of your most delightful and retired thoughts. While others are employed in contemplating the beauties of creation, you will be lost in wonder, love and praise, in meditating on the glories of the Prince of life, and Saviour of souls. You will also choose him as the portion, and life, and happiness of your hearts. You will not be the treasures of the world, but the treasures of divine wisdom, you will covet most. If you delight in God, you will often feel warm and strong desires, that will struggle with many difficulties, to obtain union and communion with him in his ordinances, in his word, and in prayer. If you neglect

these, it is to be feared you have little or no delight in God. Besides, if you delight in God, your hearts and lives will be devoted to him. Devotedness to his service, a yielding ourselves as alive from the dead, giving ourselves to the Lord, are the expressive terms used by the holy Spirit to describe the character of those who delight themselves in God.

SERMON XI.

1 Cor. xvi. 22.

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha.

UPON the principles of the gospel, a high and cordial esteem of Christ is the spring of all true religion in the soul. A feeling sense of his excellence and worth constitutes the life and spirit of devotion; without this we can never sincerely love him, or put a just and proper value on any thing connected with him; destitute of this we shall have him degraded without indignation, and exalted without delight; without this we shall have very improper and defective views of his salvation; without this we shall only be nominal Christians; dead while we live; without this we can bring no glory to the author of the gospel, nor enjoy any of its refined pleasures.

Strong and affectionate were the feelings of Paul when he uttered the words of our text. His heart was deeply impressed with a sense of the worth and glory of Jesus; and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh: "If any man love not

“the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-
 “atha.” There are two places in scripture that
 will serve fully to illustrate the apostle’s language
 here, and shew what he means by *Anathema Maran-
 atha*. The first is recorded in the epistle to the
 Galatians, 1 chap 8. verse. where you have these
 words: “But though we, or an angel from heaven,
 “preach any other gospel than that we have preached
 “unto you, *let him be accursed.*” Connect this with
 what Jude says, verse 14, 15. “Behold the Lord
 “cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute
 “judgement upon all; and to convince all that are
 “ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds,
 “which they have ungodly committed; and of all
 “their hard *speeches*, which ungodly sinners have
 “spoken against him.” When sinners detract from
 Christ, and think irreverently or speak lightly of
 the Lord of glory, they are the objects of this curse.
 The envy and malevolence of the heart are discovered
 by detraction: The enmity of the soul to any person,
 is plainly known, by actions that directly tend to his
 hurt or prejudice. It should seem that in the days
 of the apostle there were such enemies to Christ,
 who, both by hard speeches against him, and by un-
 godly deeds committed to the discredit of his religion,
 discovered their hatred and aversion to him, as the
 Saviour of the world. These are the persons the
 apostle has in view, when he says, “If any man love
 “not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema
 “Maran-atha.”—let him be accursed. And he will
 be so, when the Lord cometh with ten thousand of
 his saints to execute judgement upon all such enemies.
 Indeed, the sentence here pronounced against the
 enemies of Christ is awful! *Let them be accursed,
 when the Lord cometh.* It probably alludes to the
 Jewish excommunications, which were of three de-
 grees. In the first, the offender was put out of the
 synagogue, or merely excommunicated; In the second,
 he was not only excommunicated, but anathematized,

or cursed; in the third, which was only for the most incorrigible, he was not only anathematized, but consigned over to the judgement of the great day. The meaning then of the apostle will be, "Let him be excommunicated from the presence of God, and all holy beings, who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, as a Saviour; let him fall before him as a judge."

In discoursing on these words, I shall, in the first place, endeavour to explain the titles, or names here given to Christ.

In the second place, shew the equity of the sentence here pronounced.

In the third place, point out some evidences which may serve to shew, whether the love of Christ be in our hearts, or not. And shall then conclude the subject, by some reflections addressed to the lovers of Jesus, and to the enemies of Christ.

In the first place, I am to explain the names and titles here given to Christ, which, in other words, is to describe the essential and personal glory of the Saviour we are called to love. The title, *Lord*, here given him by the apostle, includes in it his divine and essential glory and perfections, as *God*. You are, Christians, to love him, as *God* over all, and blessed for ever! There are some who deny him this glory, because they cannot comprehend *how* the divine and human nature can subsist in personal union. It is the truth and reality of the thing, that the scriptures require us to believe, and not the manner, or mode of his being *God*. For if this principle were admitted as decisive, and if we were to believe nothing as a truth but what our shallow reason could comprehend, how few things should we believe? We should soon be led into atheism itself: for who can know *God*? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection? We believe that there is a sun that shines, but how he shines we cannot comprehend; we believe that

that there is light flowing from him, but who can comprehend either its nature, or the manner how it flows: we believe that there is such a thing as air, or wind, but who can understand its properties—who can tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; and if we will not breathe it till we comprehend it, we must soon perish. We believe that we have souls, which animate our bodies; but which of us can tell, by all the powers of reason, how, or in what manner, body and spirit are linked together, as intimate companions. There are many things in nature you see, which we believe and yet cannot comprehend. Why may there not be certain truths made known to us in the word of God, though we may be unable to comprehend how, and in what way they exist?

These preliminary remarks will pave the way for what we have to say, in a few words, concerning your belief and love of Jesus as God. This is a truth of the last importance. The godhead of Christ enters into the very heart of Christianity; “It lies at the root of all vital religion.” What is the first and great commandment? Is it not “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God?” When you connect this commandment with the awful threatening here, have you not the clearest evidence, that the commandment and the threatening are intended to secure the love of our hearts to one and the same object. It is decided by one verse in Micah, v. 2. that your Lord, whom you are to love, is from eternity. “Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me *he* that is to be ruler, or Lord in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.”

Is omnipotence an attribute of God? Of this your Saviour is possessed, as appears from Rev. i. 8. “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the *Almighty*.” Is omniscience a perfec-

tion of God? You are to believe that your Saviour possesses this; else, why did Peter say, "Lord, thou knowest all things;" else, how could he judge the world, and how can he know and supply the various and multiplied wants of his children, throughout his vast dominions. Is he not like Jehovah, immutable and unchangeable? Is he not styled, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! Unto the Son, Jehovah saith, "the heavens and earth, they shall perish, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." It is because these perfections shine forth in him, that all men are commanded to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve." But if Jesus be not God why do, not only men but angels receive this command: "Let all the angels of God worship him?" Why did Stephen pray to him, calling upon *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" Were not "all the creatures who are in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them;" as recorded in the book of Revelation, "heard saying; blessing, honour, glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." If he be not God, why does he say, making himself equal with the Father, "my Father worketh hitherto, and I work?" What are the works that Jehovah ever did, which Jesus did not perform? "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that is made. By him all things do consist; and he is said, to uphold all things by the word of his power." Is it not the right of Jehovah to forgive sins? How often, even in his humbled state, did Jesus tell an unbelieving world: "that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins, he saith unto the sick of the palsy, Take up thy bed and walk." With mercy in his look, and love in his heart, did he not say to the woman that washed his

his feet: "Thy sins are forgiven thee?" He says himself, John v. 19. "What things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise." Does he not, as God, give laws to his church? The very ordinances of his supper was instituted by him, as possessing divine authority. Could he have abrogated the passover and instituted the Lord's supper in its room, unless he had claimed supreme power, as our Lord and law-giver? For, does it not require a power equally great, to repeal a law or set aside an ordinance, as it does to enact it? If he were not God, could he send forth the Holy Ghost as a comforter? Suppose him for a moment to be an inferior creature; what would this imply—that the Spirit of Jehovah was at the command and disposal of a creature, and that a creature had supreme authority over the Holy Ghost? As God, does he not send forth his judgments into the world, and punish the children of disobedience? As God, does he not protect and defend his faithful subjects in this life, and bless and reward them in the life to come? As God, will he not raise the dead, and judge the whole human race? As such, has he not power over death and the invisible world? If he were not God, why did he say, in the days of his flesh, "I have power to lay down my life of myself, and I have power to take it up again? No creature, no, not the highest angel in glory, has power to dispose of his life, or obedience without permission from God. No person can ever have this right; for God never hath nor will give it to any. Christ alone, as God could say it, because he was "God, manifested in the flesh."

2. You are to love him as *Jesus*. This is another title here given him.

Jesus signifies a Saviour, and comprehends both his prophetic and priestly offices. For he received this name, because he was to save his people from their sins. Sensible of your need of a Saviour; sensible of our ignorance, guilt, and misery, you are to view

him and love him as the great instructor of his church; you are to view him and love him as the great atonement, and complete propitiation for sin. Had not Christ appeared in our world, and fully made known to us the will of God, we should have remained for ever ignorant of the great purposes of the infinite wisdom and mercy of God, in the plan of redemption. It is to the gospel, and the illumination of the divine Spirit, that we are indebted for a full, unerring and particular account of the ruined nature of man, and of the unsearchable riches of grace towards him.

Again, as Jesus, you are, O Christians! to love him, as making his soul an offering for sin. All men stand guilty before God; and "the wages of sin is death." As none of us can perform, to its full extent, what the law of God requires, we have no title or claim to life as a right. Present and perfect obedience, though it could be given, cannot remove the guilt of past offences. There can, therefore, be no hope in ourselves. How is the sentence of death then to be removed? On what foundation are we to stand for eternal happiness? Jesus is pointed out to us as the sure foundation; his humiliation, obedience, and death, are discovered to us as the condition of eternal life, bestowed on those who believe. You are to love him as your only deliverer from the curse of the law and the wrath to come. Renouncing all defective legal righteousness, you are to regard the righteousness and atonement of Christ as the only immediate and perfect ground, support, and encouragement of a sinner's hope in the presence of God. Jehovah, the Father, hath accepted of this atonement in the room of sinners; more than once he has declared himself well pleased in his beloved Son: "Because he was obedient unto death, Jesus, as Mediator, is now exalted to glory and immortality"—the Saviour of a believing world. "Whosoever believeth on him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." But,

3. You are to love him as *Christ*. This name, so frequently given to your Saviour, signifies anointed. Among the Jews, the ceremony of anointing prophets, priests, and kings, was common. They were solemnly set apart to these offices, by anointing the head with oil. This ceremony had the same meaning and significance in it, as coronation has in modern times. This title implies, that your Saviour is the fittest, most worthy, and honourable person; and, as such, is solemnly set apart and consecrated to be Mediator between God and man. He has all power and authority residing in him, and stands invested with a public and honourable character, such as any never had—the *Christ*; the anointed chosen Redeemer of the world. This name also suggests to you, that, as such a Redeemer, he was fully qualified, by his divine nature, and the Spirit residing in him without measure, to be a powerful and Almighty Saviour. Oil was used by the ancients as a sign or emblem of fruitfulness. When the Saviour is described as *Christ*, or *anointed*, it reminds us how fruitful he was in all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. Hence the Psalmist says: “God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” You are to love him, therefore, as the fittest person in the universe to be your deliverer from sin and death, from Satan and eternal misery. You are to love him as furnished and qualified for all and every part of his mediatorial work; as one “in-whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily.” Such is the character, and such the Saviour you are called to love. I now proceed,

In the second place, to shew the equity of the sentence here pronounced by the apostle: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed.”

1. Consider that he who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, must be an enemy to God—to all his perfections,

tions, and to the excellence and purity of his laws. Whoever pays but the smallest attention to the plan of redemption, will easily observe, the honour of Jehovah, as lawgiver, and the glory and interest of Christ, are one and the same. It is impossible to separate from each other, the moral government of God and what Christ did and suffered, as an humbled, dying Saviour. Whoever, therefore, is an enemy to Christ, must be viewed as an enemy to God; for their interests, and honour, and glory are *one*. Our blessed Lord had this in view when he discoursed with the Jews, concerning his divine commission and character. They pretended to be warm friends to God, while they discovered the deepest rancour against Christ. In opposition to which Jesus frequently said, "All things that the Father hath are mine. If God were your Father, ye would love me. I know that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not." These were the reflections he made to convince them they could not love God while they hated *him*; that they could not be friends to Jehovah, as lawgiver, and enemies to him who had the same great designs in view to execute. All who would wish to be thought friends to the One Supreme Being, but are enemies to the glory, character, and work of Christ, are acting the same part with the Jews of old—they have not the love of God in them, else they would love Christ, as the express image of his person; as the brightness of his glory; as being one with the Father. Solemn are the words of John: "Whosoever denieth the Son, hath not the Father." It is equally true, "Whosoever hateth the Son hateth the Father." See what John says, second epistle, ninth verse, to the same effect: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." Was it not a leading design, that runs through the whole of Christ's mediatorial

atorial work, to support the dignity of the divine government, the purity of the divine law, and to give men and devils a striking idea of the holiness and justice of God? Devils had done all in their power to throw off the authority of God, and to introduce the greatest disorder into his moral government. Man had followed their example. By disobedience, he discovered the blackest ingratitude, the greatest contempt of God; and being discontented with his condition, the allegiance, love, and dependence of his heart were withdrawn. By such conduct both orders of creatures—fallen spirits, and fallen man—showed their enmity to God. In opposition to what men and devils had done, Christ appeared in our nature, to honour the law of God; he was made under the law, to teach the universe how worthy it was of being obeyed; to shew how holy, just, and good it is in itself; to exhibit the holiness and purity of the divine nature; and to bring men back to a proper and humble subjection to the divine authority and dependence on the divine will—he *learned obedience*. Can you hear him saying, “My meat and my drink is to do the will of my Father.” Can you witness the submission and obedience of his heart to the will of Jehovah, and not love him as magnifying the law and making it honourable. If we do not love Jesus, we do not love his obedience; and if we love not his obedience, we do not love the law he obeyed; and if we do not love the law, we do not love the lawgiver; and of course we must hate God, we must be enemies to him at the same time we are enemies to Christ: and if so, we here read our fate: “We are condemned already, Let us be Anathema Maran-atha.”

Again, he that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, is an enemy particularly to the holiness and justice of God. It was a principle end of Christ's appearance in the world, to shew that God is *just*, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. Infinite wisdom never designed, that salvation should be preached to sinners at the
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expenditure of weakening the demands of justice, or obscuring the purity of the divine holiness. Salvation will never be conferred on any upon the ruin of these attributes. To desire such a thing would be equal to an attempt to depose the king of the Universe; for *justice and judgement are the basis of his throne*. Now, if you have any love to the justice and holiness of God; if you love to see them fully vindicated and displayed before the universe, you will love Jesus your Saviour; for in his sufferings you have the brightest displays of these attributes of God. You see his mercy and truth meeting together on the cross of Christ. The love of holiness and justice animated the heart of Christ, in every step he took in his great mediatorial work. Rather than that men should have mere thoughts of the purity and justice of God, he is willing to give himself a bleeding sacrifice for sin. If you then love a holy and just God, you will love a holy and suffering Redeemer, in whose death these perfections of God shone forth with the greatest splendour. On the other hand, if we do not love Jesus in his sufferings and death, as displaying the holiness and justice of heaven, we do not love God; we would wish to be saved, though at the expense of some of the essential attributes of Jehovah.

But again, consider that Christ appeared in our nature to destroy the works of the devil; to turn the counsels of Satan into foolishness, and to restore the heart of man to its true allegiance and happiness. Was this another great design of the Saviour's being made of a woman, made under the law? And who would not love such a Redeemer. We even love mere creatures like ourselves, who are animated with this godlike temper, and who use their best endeavours to suppress and bring to an end the interests of iniquity. Who would not admire the Lord Jesus Christ! Who would not adore his glorious and benevolent undertaking, when we see him going forth as the captain of salvation, conquering all his and our enemies!

enemies? Under his reign how are the devices of Satan defeated; how much is the empire of darkness shaken; how much are the interests of iniquity destroyed! Wherever his gospel prevails, do you not see him mighty and able to subdue all things to himself? Do you not see it producing the most wonderful changes on nations, families, and individuals? If these changes afford you no pleasure; if these conquests over Satan afford you no delight; you do not love the great Saviour, or his gospel, whereby they are brought about; and if you do not love him, you are no friend to God; if you were, you would rejoice in *him*, you would love *him* who alone has defeated, and will finally prevail over all his enemies! Can a loyal subject feel love to his sovereign, and not rejoice at the ruin of his enemies? Is there a general; is there a hero pointed out to him, who has risked life and every thing dear to him to accomplish this laborious and dangerous work; and will not his love and admiration be fixed, with gratitude upon this suffering but triumphant patriot? When David slew Goliath, and brought the mighty proud enemy of Israel lifeless to the ground, was there a lover of his king, or of Israel, that did not shout for joy? Has Jesus spoiled principalities and powers; has he made an open shew of the enemies of God on the cross; and shall we not love him and praise his name for ever? He hath bruised Satan's head; overturned all his subtle devices; routed his forces, and ruined all his malicious purposes. He therefore that is an enemy to Christ, is an enemy to Jehovah. He avowedly takes part with the inveterate foes of God.

Moreover, he that loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, must be an enemy to all the perfections of God. Are we not assured that the knowledge of the glory of God shines forth in the face of Jesus. What is it that constitutes the glory of God? Is it not the assemblage of his perfections? Whatever appears amiable and

and pure, and lovely in Jehovah, shines forth with undiminished lustre in the character and life of Jesus. Hence our Redeemer says of himself: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Is it said of God, "he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?" Is he said "to hate the workers of iniquity, and to be angry with the wicked every day." Is not the same thing said of Christ? In a Psalm prophetic of him, "he loved righteousness and hated iniquity. He is the holy and just one." In him all excellence and perfection meet; in him every degree of worth and goodness resides. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners. The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, as the visible glory of the invisible God. To hate Christ, to have no love to him, is to hate, is to feel no esteem for the moral perfections of the godhead; and consequently such a person must be an enemy to all that is pure, holy, and divine. From this train of reasoning, if there were a soul here that did not love Jesus, as honouring the law of God; as supporting the dignity of his moral government; as bearing the curse of the law to shew how holy and just God is; as defeating the enemies of God and restoring order and happiness to his creatures: as exhibiting a perfect image and transcript of the divine perfections; if, I say, there were a soul here an enemy to Christ in all these views, would he not deserve the sentence here pronounced: "Let him be Anathema Maran-atha"—let him be accursed from God; let him be banished from the society of all good beings, and made an associate with the fiends of darkness.

2. He who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ must be an enemy to mankind. Look at the humiliation of Christ; look at his doctrines, precepts, and example; his continually going about and doing good; look at his death for the redemption of men from the greatest miseries which hung over their heads: count his many labours in their service; number his grow-

ing sorrows for their eternal welfare; see him, by death, binding Satan; shutting hell, and opening heaven to all true believers; and say, "Was there ever such a brother, friend, or Saviour of men! What are all your heroes, your benefactors of men, which the page of history records, compared with Jesus, who loved us, and gave himself for us; who comes mighty to save nations, and people unnumbered? Do you love mankind? Do you love the souls of men? Do you wish to promote their highest and religious interests? If this be your character; if you thus feel love for the brethren in a high and heavenly sense, it is impossible but you must love the Lord Jesus Christ. For his love to them was stronger than death; "many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods of sorrow drown it." Would not an enemy to Joseph, in the land of Egypt, have been deemed an enemy to mankind? But what is a temporal Saviour of Egypt, to a spiritual Saviour of the world? Christ has averted the curse of the law from our heads; his own arm has wrought out salvation, for all that believe in him; he has engaged all the attributes of God in favour of the returning sinner: he has given him eternal life. By his death millions are rescued from eternal ruin. And he ever liveth and will live to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Not to love the Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, must suppose that we hate the most godlike and benevolent undertaking ever accomplished in the universe—the redemption of immortal souls by the blood of Jesus. All other deeds, that have been called beneficent, are nothing compared to that work of love to the souls of men, which Jesus finished in our world, and is still carrying on in the courts of heaven. They are, though accumulated in one, like a drop to the ocean, or the dim light of a candle to the meridian glory of the sun. If any man love not such a Redeemer, he is an enemy to mankind, to their highest and eternal interests, and will for ever be ex-

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communicated from the society of the blessed. "He shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous." "Let him be Anathema Maran-atha."

3. He who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, is an enemy to himself. Sinner! I repeat it, If you do not love Christ, you love not yourself. Remember how seriously you are told by the inspired writers: "That there is none other name given under heaven, whereby you can be saved; neither is salvation in any other." He that believeth not in the Son of God is condemned already. If you despise his salvation, you are despising the only way of obtaining eternal life. If you have a heart-aversion to him as a Saviour, you have a heart-aversion to yourself, to your best and highest interests. All other ways of safety are refuges of lies. He only is your sure salvation. All they that hate him are said to love death. He is the only door of hope for lost sinners; and if they will not, by faith, enter into life, they must perish. This is the fixed purpose of heaven, and who can reverse it? "He that hath the Son, hath life: he that hath not the Son, hath not life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Were you to see a person despise the only medicine that could cure him of an alarming distemper, would you not say, that he was careless about his health, and an enemy to himself. If Naaman had continued to despise the commands of the prophet, and to reject the waters of Jordan, as the means to heal his diseased body, would not he have been justly deemed an enemy to himself, and in love with death? On the other hand, was not the woman with the bloody issue, a lover of herself, when in faith she derived healing virtue from the presence and blessing of the Saviour. But suppose she had despised Christ, turned from him with scorn, as unworthy of her notice; suppose she had placed no confidence in him, and felt no love towards him; how long might she have remained under the painful and wasting nature of her complaint? B

not applying to Christ, in the manner she did, would she not have been an enemy to herself, and an enemy to the power and glory of the Redeemer? I may therefore say, if there be a sinner here who keeps at a distance from Christ; who does not feel the need of his saving arm and healing blood; who does not wish to approach him in love; that he neither loves the Saviour nor himself: infatuated by sin, he is in love with the certain means of death—of death eternal. What would you think of some shipwrecked mariners, exposed to the fury of the ocean, and kept from perishing only by a few scattered fragments of the wreck, refusing to receive the kind relief of being delivered by a friendly vessel appearing and sailing down to their safety? Should not we conclude that they were in love with death, and deserved to perish in the devouring deep? Sinner! this is the exact picture of your lost and perishing state, whether you see it or not. You are exposed on the ocean of life; and your breath, which is but a vapour, keeps you from perishing in the ocean of eternal misery. Jesus appears, invites, intreats, and calls you to lay hold on his salvation; He regrets your infatuation—"ye will not come unto me that ye may have life." He prays for your salvation; he bleeds and dies that ye may not perish but have everlasting life. If you do not, therefore, love him, is it not obvious that you love death; is it not evident that you are a great, infatuated, enemy to yourself. For if you love not Christ, you hate your own souls, you court your own misery, and embrace your own inevitable destruction. If, therefore, there be persons in this assembly who do not love Christ (and O how awful to think if there be many of this description!) you see their character, you read their doom; they are condemned already; they are enemies to Jehovah by being enemies to Christ; they are enemies to his law, justice, moral government; to his divine perfections, and moral excellence; they are enemies to mankind, to that

plan of divine wisdom which publishes peace on earth, and goodwill towards men; they are enemies to themselves, to their own eternal happiness. Do they not deserve the awful sentence: *Let them be Anathema Maran-atha*; let them be accursed of God, banished from the abodes of the blessed; let them not stand in the congregation of the righteous; for the wrath of God abideth on them.

S E R M O N XII.

1 Cor. xvi. 22..

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha.

THE supreme excellence of Jesus, is represented to our view in the gospel, in order to engage our hearts and captivate our affections. The soul that knows not his worth, that feels not a sense of his love, must be lost to every thing good and great, excellent and valuable. If we love Jesus, we shall enjoy all the blessings of his purchase; if we hate him, we shall be punished with everlasting destruction. This is the express declaration of the Spirit of truth; and there is no possibility of reversing the awful doom of the enemies of the gospel: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha."

After having established the precise meaning of these words, I proposed, in the former discourse, to explain the titles or names here given to Christ; to shew the equity of the sentence here pronounced; to point out some evidences which may serve to shew

whether the love of Christ be in our hearts or not ; and then to conclude with some reflections addressed to the lovers and the enemies of Christ.

I have illustrated the two first of these general heads of discourse; and have shewn what is implied in the three designations here given to the Saviour: He is the *Lord*, God over all blessed for ever ; he is *Jesus*, because as Mediator he saves his people from their sins ; and is called *Christ*, because the anointed of God, and set apart for carrying on, and finishing the great work of our redemption.

Now, if we consider the worth and excellence of Christ in all these points of view, we see at once the awful situation of those who hate him ; which led us to shew the equity of the sentence here pronounced.

He who loves not the Lord Jesus Christ, must be an enemy to God, to all his perfections, and to the excellence and purity of his laws. He must be an enemy to mankind, and to himself, and consequently must be truly miserable and wretched. Let him be accursed of God, banished from the abodes of the happy ; let him not stand in the congregation of the righteous ; for the wrath of God abideth upon him.

I come now, in the third place, to mention a few of the evidences whereby you may judge whether the love of the Lord Jesus Christ be in you or not.

1. He who loves Christ will not be a lover of his sinful self ; he will not set up any thing he calls his own ; his will, his affections, his wisdom in opposition to the important interests and glory of his Redeemer. A greater enemy to the love of Christ cannot inhabit the soul of man, than an undue and sinful love of one's self. Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, iii. 2. speaks of perilous times to come in the latter days ; and among many other signs of these degenerate times, he mentions this as the first : " Men shall be lovers of themselves"—lovers of their own inventions in opposition to the will of God ; lovers of their

their own schemes, in opposition to the wisdom of heaven; lovers of their own desires and ways, in opposition to the commands and ways of Jehovah; lovers of their own merit, in opposition to the righteousness of God, which is by faith: in short, lovers of their own opinions, in opposition to the judgement of God. Wherever this love of self-wisdom and self-direction, of self-disposal takes place, it is utterly inconsistent with the love of Christ in the heart. It is essential to the true character of a disciple of Jesus to deny his selfish spirit, and with all teachableness of mind, to learn and then to abide by the will of Jesus. As long as we remain lovers of ourselves, in this sinful way; as long as this unhallowed principle prevails and operates in the unrenewed heart, the bias of the soul tends to that which is evil; sin is readily embraced, indulged, and pursued; conscience is hardened; and every holy emotion, or impression, soon effaced. To love, to admire, to obey, to idolize self, is the most impious kind of idolatry in the world. Is it not to worship the creature more than the great creator? Is it not like setting Dagon above the Ark—useful vain man, with all his boasted devices, above God? Is it not to set up the will of the creature on the throne of Jehovah; and to say to the Almighty, Who is the Lord that we should obey him? If the love of Christ be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, the love of self-wisdom, of self-will, of self-ends, of self-pursuits, and self-enjoyments, that is opposite to the will of your God, shall grow weaker and weaker, and at last be wholly expelled from your hearts. Converted by the grace of God, you will become as little children, ready to receive, with humility, the will of your Redeemer. This only you will follow, and at his glory only will you aim.

2. When *heart-felt love* to Christ prevails, the love of the world and the things of time will be weakened, and at last entirely give way to the influence of this divine principle. John, in his first epistle, ii. 15.

tells

tells us, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." By the world, he means the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. Wherever love to Christ predominates as a ruling principle, the lust of the eye is mortified, the lust of the flesh weakened; the pride of life humbled. By the cross of Christ, the world is crucified to the true Christian, and he is crucified to the world. "His eyes are turned from beholding vanity; his heart, his desires, and affections are set on things above." The love of the world steals away the soul from God. By its allurements, it makes the heart forget its gratitude, obedience, and dependence on God, as the giver of all good. The Mammon of unrighteousness becomes a formidable rival to God, and often supplants his fear and love in our hearts. Hence covetousness is said to be idolatry; we worship, pursue and serve the things of time and sense, as if they were our God. I cannot specify all the idols which the world places before our eyes, as objects of worship. Suffice it to say, whatever object, or thing deadens our souls to the power of religion; or shuts the door of our hearts against the admission of the love of God and of Christ, that is the idol which must be dethroned, before Jesus can reign as sovereign of our souls. Look into society, and you will see many living proofs of the baneful influence of a worldly spirit. Are not all those persons who mind earthly things with undue attachments, determined enemies to the knowledge and love of divine objects? Do they not lie in wickedness, and does not Satan rule in their hearts, as the children of disobedience? The sensual and carnal principles which compose the love of the world, are destructive of the spiritual and heavenly principles which the spirit of God implants in the heart of every child, or disciple of Christ. The love of the world will prove at last the death of the soul: "For if ye live after the flesh (another name for the world) ye shall die." How many apostates

apostates from the truth and cause of Christ has not the love of the world made? Why did Demas and others forsake the apostles, and walk no more with them; was it not the love of the world, prevailing over a temporary, and nominal love to Christ? The best evidence, therefore, you can have that you love the Lord Jesus Christ, is the daily exercise of a holy jealousy and watchfulness over your hearts, in guarding against an undue and inordinate love of the world. Animated by a sacred regard to your divine master; and by the glorious hopes placed before you, if you live above its bewitching honours; its ensnaring delights and pleasures; and its captivating riches and profits, then indeed the love of God and of Christ reigns in your souls.

3. Where *heart-felt love* to the Lord Jesus Christ prevails, it soon discovers itself, by bringing the real Christian to part with every enjoyment, and to bear all for the sake of Christ. Look to the cloud of witnesses, recorded in the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, and measure the strength of their love to their God and Saviour by the sacrifices they made, and the sufferings they bore. Did not they forsake their own kindred, and country, and fathers' house; counting it more honourable to suffer and live with the people of God, than dwell in ease and affluence in kings' houses? Behold them giving up with every thing that was near and dear to them, as men who were called to testify the love of their hearts to God. Do you not see them living as pilgrims and strangers in the world, looking for a better, even an heavenly, country? Fix your mind not only on their leaving their enjoyments, but suffering all things for his sake and interest in the world; see them encompassed with enemies on every side, and yet steadfast; see them bearing reproaches, afflictions and persecutions, and death itself, and yet rejoicing in God; see them embracing every cross, rather than quit their embraces of Christ; see them counted as sheep for

for the slaughter, as killed all the day long, rather than deny their Lord. We hold out these parts of their conduct as proofs, that the love of Christ was in them; and dare an unbelieving world deny their force? If this question were then put to each of you: What would you give up and part with for Christ? What would you suffer and bear, to testify your love to him? What would be your answer? Each of you that can say: I would give up and part with all things for Christ; I would suffer and bear all afflictions, rather than forego my interest in the salvation of my Redeemer; is a lover of Christ indeed. You are to say this really to-morrow at his table. * You are to express your love, by such firm and holy resolutions, else the love of Christ is not in you. The language of every believing communicant to Christ will be the same as Ruth's to Naomi: "Thy God shall be my God; thy people shall be my people; where thou lodgest I will lodge; where thou goest I will go; I will follow thee through good and bad report!"

4. Where *heart-felt love* to Christ prevails, an affectionate regard to the gospel, and the doctrines and truths he taught, will discover itself. If we love a friend, will we not love his useful instructions; his wise sayings; his prudent maxims? These will be engraven on our hearts; when he is no more in the world; we will retain them long in our memories and always speak of them with just esteem. Christians, you have a friend, a Redeemer in the heavens, who spake as never man spake. Precious are the doctrines and words which proceeded out of his mouth. You will receive these in the love of them; as new-born babes, you will desire them as the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby. Your necessary food will not be more refreshing to your bodies than the truth, as it is in Jesus, will be to your souls.

* Preached on a Saturday before the Lord's Supper.

will say with David of old: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day; and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." The doctrines and precepts of Christ are sweeter unto the child of God, than honey, or the honey comb. If ever the gospel of Christ have enlightened your eyes, and the doctrines of grace opened and humbled your hearts, to receive him as the King of Glory; if ever they have warmed your souls, interested your affections, and guided and governed your conscience; if ever they have imparted that peace of mind, that passeth all understanding, and caused you to bring forth fruit unto holiness: in short, if they have made you obedient to God; useful and merciful to your fellow men; and happy in your own minds; such will be your esteem of them, that you will as soon quit with life, as quit with one doctrine or truth which Jesus taught. "Buy the truth, and sell it not," are the words of Solomon; but they are also deeply engraven on the heart of every soul, that loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. Wherever *heart-felt love* to Christ prevails, deep rooted hatred to all sin will, in a greater or less degree, be experienced in proportion to our progress in the divine life. The love of God, and the love of sin cannot, at the same time, habitually prevail in the heart; for they are as contrary to each other as heaven and hell, light and darkness. It is sin that makes us enemies to God, and enemies to ourselves. How frequently does God tell us in his word, that sin, that all transgressions of his law, are hateful to him. In proportion as the love of sin reigns in your hearts, you are enemies to God; and in exact proportion as it is mortified and weakened, you are the friends of God. For the Psalmist says, Psal. xcvi. 10. "They that love the Lord, will hate evil." To live under the prevailing, uncontrolled influence of sin; to live under the
continued

continued love of it in the heart ; and to love Christ at the same time, who bled and died to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, is a thing impossible ; it is the greatest contradiction in nature. What was that ever made any intelligent creature an enemy to God ? what made the glorious hosts of heaven rebel and commence acts of rebellion against their rightful Lord ? What was it that brought death into the world with all our woes ? What brought the Son of God to the cursed death of the cross ? What hath called forth the judgements of God in every age ? What is still separates the heart from God ? Is it not sin ? And say, can the love of sin, and the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, dwell in the same heart ? It is impossible ; for as a pious Author expresses himself : “ Sin will make you depart from God ; or it will make God depart from you.”

6. Where *heart-felt love* to the Lord Jesus Christ prevails, a grateful sense of divine pardon will daily comfort the soul. Pardon of sin, through faith in the blood of Jesus, peace restored to the conscience, perplexed heart, fill the true Christian with the warmest gratitude. Such grateful obligations are felt in the soul, as must vent themselves in love. Do you wish to see a lively picture of this ; it is already drawn to your hand in Luke's gospel, viii. chap. 28. ver. in the instance of Mary Magdalene. By converting grace she was brought into the service of God, from the service of sin and Satan. From that moment, the warmest gratitude entered her soul, and her heart was melted with love. From that moment, she never forgot the loving kindness of God. She felt the blessedness of those whose transgression is pardoned, and unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. See her kneeling down at her Saviour's feet ; she calls not for water, but tears are ready in abundance to wash his sacred feet ; she calls not for a towel, but her hair is ready to wipe them ; those kisses, that perhaps been employed to allure the unwary, are now employed

employed to honour the great Redeemer! See her, with affection on her countenance and love in her heart, not only washing his feet and wiping them with her hair, but kissing them with her lips. "Whence, Mary, all these tears; whence all these expressions of gratitude; whence all these kisses? Proceed they not from hence—from much love in your heart? you loved much, because much was forgiven you; you abounded in labours of love, because Christ first loved you and gave himself for you." Thus, Christians! will you feel and act as God gives you opportunity, if, like Mary, you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. You will love the Lord Jesus Christ, because he has performed for you the greatest act of sovereign grace. Why is David all-gratitude in the ciii. Psalm, verses 2, 3, 4.: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." If you are like Mary or David, the sound of pardon will never reach your ears, it will never be felt in your hearts, without all its blessed and holy fruits; without filling your soul with joy, with holy gratitude and wonder.

7. Where *heart-felt love* to Christ prevails, it will discover itself, by "walking humbly with God," in the way of holiness, and by a careful observance of his commands and ordinances. "If ye love me," saith Christ, "keep my commandments; for he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." If you carefully read the scripture account of the greatest characters recorded in it, you will find this true of every one of them: The more they were distinguished for love to God, the more eminently did they shine in holiness. Read the story of Abraham. How much did he love God; how singular, at the same time, was he for holiness, in the midst of much wickedness. Is not Noah, Ca-

Job, Moses, David, Job, pointed out to us as friends of God, and marked as holy and devout men in their deportment and conversation. The commandments of God were written upon their hearts by the divine Spirit; they delighted in the law of the Lord; they meditated on it day and night. Does not the mention of the names of Zecharias and Elizabeth, of Mary, Simeon, and Anna, of Peter, and Paul after his conversion, suggest to us at once the friendship and love they felt to God, and the holiness of their lives; which was the genuine effect of their supreme love. They did not show love with their mouths only, but their whole conduct, through every stage of their pilgrimage, after they were born of God, bespoke the love of their hearts. O that there were such an heart in you, to fear, to love God, and keep all his commandments! You are to come to-morrow to his ordinance, and to express the love of your souls to him, by a devout and reverential waiting on God. Say, as you approach the table of the Lord, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, Lord God of hosts! How I love thy law; it is all my delight! Thy statutes are my songs, in this the house of my pilgrimage."

Lastly, Wherever *heart-felt love* to Christ prevails, love to his children and family will prevail also. The ordinance you have in view is a feast of love; it is joining in full communion with the household of faith. If, therefore, you love Christ, you will love all his servants, and all that bear his image. "If you love not your brother, whom you have seen, how can you love God or Jesus whom you have not seen." This ordinance is designed, not only to unite your souls more closely to Jesus your Saviour, but to bind your hearts to each other in the firmest love. The memorials of Christ's death are the monitors to you, how you should "lay aside all malice, and rancour and evil-speaking; and put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, compassion, tenderness and love." Your love to your brethren, and

the table of the Lord, will be cordial and sincere, if you have the love of Christ in you. It will be pure, disinterested, and universal, to all the saints scattered abroad. You will feel the love of esteem for them; for here you will honour them that fear the Lord. Who are the objects of Christ's special love in the world? Are they not the saints, the excellent ones of the earth. Where God fixes his love, you may fix yours with safety. What God judges to be excellent, you may deem worthy of the best affections of your soul. You should feel for them a love of delight; taking pleasure in their company, in their conversation, in their holiness, in their prosperity, in their spiritual good and peace. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee. For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good." This is the language of love, expressed by every heart that loves the Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity and truth.

Such are the marks and evidences of the love of Christ shed abroad in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost: they who love the Lord Jesus Christ are denied to self; the love of the world is more and more weakened in their souls; they are willing to part with every enjoyment, and to bear all for Christ. They entertain the most affectionate regard to the gospel and its precious doctrines; a deep-rooted hatred to all sin prevails in their hearts; a grateful sense of divine pardon comforts their souls; love to Christ will discover itself by a careful observance of all his commands and ordinances; and, finally, by a pure, disinterested, and universal affection to the brethren.

I shall now conclude the subject, by laying before you a few considerations, that may be useful to engage

gage your hearts to love the Lord Jesus Christ more and more.

1. Consider how divine and lovely he is in himself; how lovely he is in his divine nature; how lovely in his human character, in his humbled and exalted state! If the eye of faith unfold all the glories of your Redeemer to your view; your souls will be ravished with his love. If you are called to see the king in his beauty, travelling in the greatness of his strength, your hearts will be captivated with his excellence. He will appear as altogether lovely: for to them that believe, he is and ever will be precious.

2. Consider how suitable a Saviour he is. He is Lord to conquer your hearts and subdue your enemies. He is Jesus to save you from the guilt, the power and love of sin. He is Christ, full of grace and truth. Nothing that the sinner can want, or wish for, but is to be found in him in whom the fulness of the godhead dwelleth bodily. Are you ignorant? Is he not the wisdom of God? Are you guilty? Did not he suffer, the just for the unjust that he might bring you nigh unto God? Are you weak? He is the mighty one, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Do you want righteousness and strength; peace and pardon; joy in living; comfort in dying; grace here, glory hereafter? All these are only to be found in him, in whom are hid all the treasures of divine wisdom and mercy. Bread is not more suitable to the hungry; water to the thirsty; health to the sick, than this Saviour is to your souls. O how much should you love him, as the light and life of your hearts!

3. In order to inflame your souls to him, consider how he has loved you, and manifested his love to you. Is not his love for you pure, disinterested, cordial, unexampled, constant, persevering, everlasting. If you saw the holy flame of love that still burns in the Saviour's breast, how would your hearts warm to him! Think of the strength of his love. Many waters could

could not quench it; neither could the floods drown it. As nothing can shake it; so nothing can equal it. As nothing could prevent it; so nothing shall ever impair or destroy it. "For, whom the Lord loveth, he loveth unto the end." His love is an everlasting love. His bowels of compassion will for ever yearn over his people, till, as the ransomed of the Lord, they are brought to Zion above, with joy and everlasting songs upon their heads. Say, will not these circumstances increase your love, and make it wax stronger and stronger.

4. Hence see how much Jehovah is dishonoured, by dishonouring Christ. Those who reject his gospel, who despise his doctrines; who contemn his death, shall be accursed of God. To reject him, is to reject the counsel and wisdom of God against ourselves. Whatever you be, and whatever you do, if you do not love Christ, God will not love you. For, without Christ ye can do nothing that is honourable or acceptable to God. A want of love to Christ, is a breach of the law of God; a contempt of his holiness, of his perfections, of his love; and what will God do with such a contemner of himself? The great commandment that God has given to men is, that they should believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God. Now, a breach or contempt of this commandment, will be treated as a contempt of the whole law. Does the curse fall on the head of him that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them; and does not a want of love to Jesus entail the same curse on every offender—"Let him be Anathema, Maran-athâ." Are not the laws of God, the laws of good society, the laws of self-preservation violated, by contempt of Jesus; and what curse can equal such aggravated guilt? Where then shall the poor, proud, self-conceited deist betake himself? Where shall an unbelieving world find shelter? Heaven is armed against them, while they continue enemies to Christ. Their own conscience is

armed against them; and the curse of God rests upon them now, and will rest upon them through eternal ages: "For if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha." O how powerful an argument is this for you to flee to him as the hope set before you! All who would not flee to the ark for safety, perished in the mighty waters. These were the deists and unbelievers of Noah's age, and they turned a deaf ear to the great doctrines he taught; they betook themselves to refuges of lies, and were destroyed. All unbelievers under the gospel; all who will not flee to Christ, as an hiding-place from the storm, shall as inevitably perish. If they turn a deaf ear to God in the day of his mercy, he will turn a deaf ear to them, in the day of his vengeance.

5. How melancholy is it to think, how few among professing Christians give good evidence of their love to God and Christ! You have seen how this love discovers itself. If so; alas! how few vital experimental lovers of Christ are there in the world. When we look abroad in the earth, men seem to be lovers of every thing but of the Lord Jesus Christ. But as many as you meet, converse with, or live among; as many as you see void of this love; tell them they are living with an awful curse upon their basket and store, on their soul and bodies. Let parents tell their children this; and if they love the salvation of their souls they will do it. Let masters tell their servants this, and if they believe they have a master in heaven, they will do so, and save their own souls in the day of the Lord. Let husband and wife tell each other this important truth. It may be a mean of forming Christ in each other, the hope of glory. Let ministers tell their people; let them cease not to sound this awful sentence in the sinner's ear, warning every man, and teaching every man: "If he love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he is and will be Anathema, Maran-atha." Let me expostulate the matter with you, O sinner!

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Will those things you love, and to which you give your heart, do ever as much for you as Christ has and is still doing for you. Do they deserve your love better than he? Will they reward it better, will they in the end prove salvation or death to your souls? Oh! why then throw your love away; your souls away; your Saviour, your heaven, your God away, for such perishing and ruinous objects?

6 How comfortable is this subject to the people of God. You love the Lord Jesus Christ; the sentence in the text is reversed to you. You are the blessed of the Lord. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. He is all your desire, and he will be all your salvation. Many are the promises made to you; and you have not to dread one curse in this sacred volume.

7 Let me exhort you daily to express your love to Jesus. He is daily expressing his love to you. You are never out of his thoughts. You lie near his heart; and he has your names written on the palms of his hands. O be not weary in showing your love to him. Let not his cause or interest be coldly, or formally supported by you on earth. He is not coldly managing your interests in heaven. Go from ordinance to ordinance, with love in your souls, until you come to sing with the redeemed; "Unto him that loved us, and washed us in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father, be glory for ever."

Finally, Examine yourselves by those evidences I have laid before you, whether you feel the love of Christ constraining you. Are you self-denied? Is love to the world losing ground every day in your hearts? Are you willing to part with all rather than be separated from Christ? Are you ready to suffer all for his sake? Have you a high regard for his gospel, and its important doctrines? Do you feel an increasing hatred to all sin? Have you, or do you wish above all things to have an abiding sense of the divine pardon

don on your hearts? Is it your fixed resolution, in the strength of divine grace, to walk in the ways of new obedience; and do you love the brethren with a pure heart fervently? If you have such evidences of love to Christ, you are indeed highly blessed of God. He rejoices over you, as his dear children. He will bless you with his presence, in every ordinance here below, in every duty and in every trial; and will at last bring you to his house above, where the divine principles of love will be perfected; and where you shall enjoy the grand object of your supreme desires, without interruption and without end.

S E R M O N XIII.

Prov. viii. 17.

I love them that love me——

IN every age of the church, it has appeared of importance, to have just and accurate views of that *Wisdom*, which is the subject of Solomon's particular description, in this chapter. The most approved interpreters of scripture, and the general sense of the church, have considered it as one of the peculiar names of the Lord Jesus Christ. From the language of the 2. and 23. verses this sense is clearly ascertained: The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." In these verses, all the properties of a living agent, or person, are assigned to Wisdom. The New Testament language bears us out in this interpretation, and supports this sense affixed to it. In various places we find this name, or title, given to Christ. In Luke i. 49. "Therefore, saith the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles;" which, when compared with Luke vii. 35. "But wisdom is justified in all her children;" leaves no doubt on our minds

minds who is the person, or character meant. This is still more evident from what Paul writes, 1 Cor. i. 24. "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God;" and in the 30. verse, he is said to be "made to his church, wisdom." Think then of the infinite dignity, and eternal glory of him, who here condescends to behold the things that are done on earth; to make kind and gracious promises to them that love him, and to assure them of his comfortable presence. The loving Redeemer, on every occasion appears glorious in the eyes of his people! "I love them that love me; and they that seek me early shall find me." The Redeemer cannot be loved, he cannot be sought in vain. What encouraging language is this!

There is one other remark necessary to be made in entering on this subject; which is, we are not to imagine that love riseth first in the heart of the creature, to the great Creator. The love of the Redeemer is the origin and cause of our love to him. The truth is, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." It was hid in the Redeemer's breast, and the first discoveries of merciful love ever made to man, were when sin had entailed death and misery on our race. Gen. iii. 15. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Brighter and brighter manifestations took place, as ages rolled on; as dispensation succeeded dispensation; and at last, the fulness of time arrived, when "God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." This last and highest display of love leads us to the true source of our love to him. "We love him *because* he *first* loved us." John iv. 19. Jehovah's love therefore, is the efficient cause of our love. The love of the creature is, alas! cold and weak, small and inconsiderable. The sacrifice of love which we bring to his altar is so languid, that we have reason

to fear he will reject it, and put our offerings far from him. This thought often dejects the humble Christian, and depresses his soul, while he draws near to God. He sees, he feels an infinite disproportion between the love that God bestows, and the love which he himself can return. God, therefore, designs by the promise here, to remove these impressions, and to assure the humble worshipper, that the weakest sparks of divine love in the soul are acceptable to him; and that the smallest flame shall come up to his mercy-seat, as incense. "I love them that love me. He that loveth me, saith Christ, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him." John xiv. 21.

In discoursing on this subject, I mean, as assisted by God, to illustrate, first, the properties of Christ's love to his church.

Second, The nature of his people's love to him.

And then conclude with an improvement.

In the first place, I am to illustrate the properties of Christ's love to his church.

The love of Christ to the world, is a subject placed before the eyes of his church, in various and endearing points of light. The scriptures are full of descriptions of Christ's love. It is shed abroad through every page of the bible, as well as through every heart redeemed by his blood. We must however observe, that to explain it fully is a work beyond the powers either of angels or of men. The redeemed in glory make it their delightful theme; and it will be their eternal employment, to utter all their praise and wonder; yet we shall attempt to enumerate such circumstances, as place it in a distinguished point of light before the eyes of his people.

1. The love of Christ to his redeemed is from everlasting to everlasting. Man, finite man, can scarce form any just conception what eternity is. We are
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able to form a notion of what a week, a month, or a year is; but a duration of eternal existence baffles all our powers to comprehend. Before all worlds, and all time, your Saviour loved you: "When Jehovah possessed him, in the beginning of his way, his delights were with the sons of men." The prophet Jeremiah conveys this idea in very plain terms, chap xxxi. 30. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Before the mountains were brought forth; before the earth was established; or the heavens stretched out; Christ felt love to a perishing world. Dwell, Christians! on this thought; and the more you contemplate the subject, the more will you be lost in wonder and adoration. With what humility and reverence should we adore that love which reaches from eternity to eternity! Many and distinguished are the fruits and effects of this love, which Christ discovered in time: but for the cause of their fruits and effects, we must look back before all time, and all worlds, and trace up the love of our Redeemer to an eternal duration." O the "height and depth, the breadth and length of the love of God; it passeth knowledge."

2. The love of Christ to his redeemed is free and undeserved. It was free, undeserved grace that brought Jesus Christ into our world. The language of scripture frequently reminds us of this property of the love of Christ. The Lord, by his prophet, says: "I will love them freely," We cannot, and will not say, that as guilty condemned creatures we have a claim on God, or have deserved such a display of his love as he has given. To no sinner under heaven, or among men, is God a debtor. If he were to mark iniquity against us, judgement, instead of mercy, should be our merited portion. All that Christ hath done for or bestows on the believing and redeemed soul must be viewed as the effect of free and undeserved love. Are you effectually called to the knowledge of Christ? Are you his adopted children; living in his family

family and enjoying the smiles of his love? Are you justified and viewed as righteous in the sight of Jehovah; pardoned and accepted for his great name's sake: Are you living under the influence of that faith and hope, which unites your souls to Jesus? and say, to whom are you indebted for this salvation? Have not the scriptures an answer ready to these questions? "By the grace of God, I am what I am. Not according to works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began," Rom. ix. 5. 6. What is it in the sinner that can attract his love? Is it our misery; our guilt; our enmity to his laws and government; our unworthiness; our ingratitude and rebellion against him? Man is laden with iniquity; is covered with transgression; and exposed every moment to death and misery. No sinner has comeliness, beauty, or worth in him to attract the love, or move the affection of Christ. Had man stood in his first state of innocence; had he continued to love and honour his God; he might have possessed a higher title to the regard of his Creator. But how changed his state! he is now an enemy to God, loving every thing he should hate, and hating every thing he should love. God hath indeed commended his love, in that while we were enemies, Christ died for us. It is not the way of man to love any object without feeling strong and powerful motives to excite and fix his love. How true is it then, that "God's thoughts are not as our thoughts; neither are his ways as our ways: for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways above our ways." Christ often fixes his love where we should least expect it. His love is often placed on the most miserable and undeserving objects. He magnifies his grace and salvation, in the redemption of the most wretched creatures. Are there not some of you now saying: "His love to me was indeed free and unmerited; he plucked me as a brand from the burning; he deli-

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“vered me from going down to the pit, having paid
 “a ransom.—O with what truth, with what pleasure
 “of mind, do I join his redeemed church in saying:
 “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all
 “the glory! What are we; what is our fathers’
 “house, that thou hast brought us hitherto?”

3. Christ’s love to his redeemed is immutable and unchangeable. The love that is mutable and changeable, is little valued or esteemed. That love which is like the floating cloud or the shifting wind; how deservedly is it disregarded by men! But how glorious to think, that the love of Christ to his redeemed is like himself—“the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He is the Lord, that changeth not: and “whom he loves, he loves unto the end.” Poor sinners are liable to change every day; yea, almost every moment; but how refreshing to know, that with our Redeemer there is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Indeed, the appearances of his providence often seem to change, in the experience of his people; but his mercy endureth for ever; his love never changeth. His love moveth the great wheels of providence; and in all their movements he maketh all things to work together for the good of his people. When his frowns appear to be darkest, he has most love in his heart; when he chastiseth most severely, he best consults our profit; he makes us partakers of his holiness; when he leads us through the rough path, he is, in love, conducting us to a city of habitation. Paul had strong and comfortable views of his love when he could say, “For I am persuaded, that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature “shall be able to separate us from the love of God “which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

4. Christ’s love to his redeemed is transcendent and superlative love. All the love ever felt by angels or men, is not to be compared to that love which Christ

feels for his church. It is transcendently inexpressible. Think of the glory he possessed and the misery to which he stooped; think of the nature and state in which he was, and the low nature and humble condition to which he came, and say what must have been his love? Much he veiled, much he gave up in displaying his love to men. We may admire the love that Jacob bore to Rachel—year after year, with much patience, he endured the most painful and laborious fatigues; and no toil could cool the ardour of his affection. Strong, likewise, was the love of Jonathan to David: he gave the most convincing proof of his attachment and regard; but how infinitely short are these instances to the love of Christ wherewith he hath loved us. What are the toils which Jacob endured, to the sufferings which Christ bore? What the self-denial and danger which Jonathan encountered, to the self-denial and death of our Lord, for the sake of his people? As there is no proportion between what is finite and infinite; so there can be no proportion between the love of any creature and the love of Christ, the creator of all. We have some feeling sense of the tender love that binds relation to relation; that unites a faithfulness friend to friend; that ties the careful and indulgent parent to his beloved offspring; that unites heart with heart in the nearest and most intimate relation that subsists on earth: but all these are but faint emblems of the transcendent love of our Redeemer. To all these it is often compared; but in every instance, the superiority is given to the love of our Saviour. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isa. xlix. 15. "I have engraven thee on the palms of my hands. He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." He is a husband, kinsman, a Saviour that loved us unto the death, and gave himself for us.

5. Christ's love to his redeemed is bountiful and

active. The love of the world often evaporates in unmeaning and empty wishes; but the love which Jesus hath loved us, manifests itself in the richest and most bountiful expressions. Whatever good you have enjoyed, either temporal or spiritual; whatever favours or blessings heaven has showered down upon you, and whatever hopes you are called to entertain, all flow from the active love of Christ. Who can number his mercies? Who can enumerate or value his blessings? We might as well count the stars of heaven, or number the sand on the sea-shore! It was love that led him to become the surety of that covenant, which is well ordered in all things and sure; it was love that made him assume our nature; that made him under the law, to redeem them that are under the law; to fulfil all righteousness; to bleed and die as a sacrifice for sin. It is his active and bountiful love that makes him destroy the enmity in our hearts to him; that converts and renews us in the spirit of our minds: it is his love that admits us into the privileges of his family, and enriches our souls with the fruits of the Spirit; it is his Spirit that mortifies the love and power of sin, and makes us meet for glory; it is his love that giveth us grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold. Look at the tears which Christ shed; hear his pressing and earnest invitations; see his zeal, in continually going about doing good; survey the scorn and reproach he bore; the suffering and agonies he endured; and the death he met, in offering up that high and adorable sacrifice for the sins of men, and say, was not his love to our souls bountiful and active indeed!

6. Christ's love to his redeemed is a distinguishing love. The Psalmist offers up a prayer which marks the peculiar nature of that love which Christ bears to his people: "Remember me, Lord, with that love which thou bearest to thine own." The love that Jesus feels and bears to his own, is not common and promiscuous love. Our Lord, as Creator and Go-

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vernor of the world, is good unto all; he makes his
 sun to shine and his rain to fall on the just and unjust.
 But how inferior is that beneficence, which is spread
 before all his creatures, and of which all, in some
 measure participate, to that peculiar and covenant-
 love which he ever discovers to those that are his own.
 It is this love he ever keeps and reserves for his re-
 deemed; and as they are his peculiar property, he
 ever remembers them with that love he bears to his
 people, visiting their souls with his salvation. What
 an endearing distinction did this love lead our Savi-
 our to make, in passing by the nature of angels, and
 taking on him the seed of Abraham! The bright and
 morning stars that, fell from their first glory, by rebel-
 lion and apostacy, he leaves under the awful conse-
 quences of their guilt; and they are plunged in mi-
 sery without hope. This was not the part he acted
 to man. He, who was in the form of God, took
 upon him the form of a servant, and, in our nature,
 showed in what a distinguishing manner he set his
 love on man, sinful, polluted and guilty man, and
 plucked him as a brand from the burning: How
 long have these sinful nations enjoyed the high privi-
 lege of his gospel and ordinances, while many na-
 tions are left ignorant of the name of Christ, and are
 utter strangers to the beauty and glory of his gospel.
 They know not the distinguishing mercy of having
 communion with God, or fellowship with his Son Je-
 sus Christ, by the Holy Spirit. How different his
 love, bestowed on us; how endearing the privileges
 we now enjoy! But even in nations that bear the
 Christian name, is it not to be feared that there are
 too many living at ease, in profound ignorance of those
 things that belong to their eternal peace? They know
 not what it is to love Christ, and, alas! they have ne-
 ver known that the Lord is gracious to their souls;
 they have never given him their love, and they know
 not what it is to experience the smiles of his favour,

which is the life of the soul; and his loving kindness, which is better than life.

If, Christians! you know him and love him; if you have been called to the knowledge of salvation by his name; what reason have you to adore his peculiar and distinguishing mercy! It is one of a city, and two of a family only, he often calls to feel the power of his grace and the comfort of his love. Are you, believers, a part of this redeemed company, who are the objects of his distinguishing love? How are your hearts affected to the Redeemer? Does not distinguished love bestowed, challenge a return of distinguished love from your souls? Is it not now the language of your hearts: "O love the Lord all ye his
"faints; we will remember thy love more than
"wine?"

How necessary it is then for Christians often to review and meditate upon the love of Christ! If they were to consult their own comfort, and study their solid interest, to this delightful subject would they frequently have recourse. Mingling too much with the world, we are often disappointed; we are hurt with the prevalence of sin; we are grieved at seeing the sons of men loving vanity. Meditations on the love of Christ, on the other hand, how soothing; how comfortable and satisfying to the heart! Devout meditations on this subject carry our souls to eternal ages; above time, life, sin and vanity; and fix our hearts on him who is love, and the author and finisher of our faith. Let us live in the admiration of his love, as a real source of our genuine happiness. What is now the delightful employment of the saints in glory? Are they not forever employed in adoring that love which made them kings and priests unto God? Of this pleasant work they will never be weary. In heaven no tongue will ever tire, no heart will ever grow cold, in uttering his eternal praise.

Having thus enumerated the properties of the love

of Christ to his redeemed, I now proceed, in the second place, to illustrate and explain the nature of that love which his children should ever shew to him.

But before we enter more particularly into this part of the subject, it may be proper, to give a definition of this divine principle in the hearts of Christ's children. In general we may remark, that love is a gracious principle, or habit, wrought in the soul by the Spirit, which inclines us to delight in, esteem, and earnestly desire to enjoy an interest in God's favour, and communion with him, as our chief good, portion and happiness; and the source of all excellency; and which likewise disposes us to do good to all, especially to such as resemble God in holiness, and bear his image.

1. This principle of divine love is implanted in the soul by the Holy Spirit. The apostle tells us that the "fruit of the Spirit is love." While man remains in his guilty and unrenewed state, there is no well-directed self-love to himself; much less is there love to his Redeemer. The unbeliever loves every thing in preference to his God and Saviour. By nature we are enemies to God. This heavenly grace must come from God, and ever leads the soul to the fountain of love. It is the Spirit of all grace that kindles this holy spark in our souls, and draws out the desires and affections of the Christian to God, as their first and great object, on which, with complacency, they rest.

2. This principle of love arises from a discovery, which the Spirit makes in the soul, of Christ's peculiar loveliness. When Christ is apprehended by the soul, as altogether lovely and excellent, nothing is so easy or pleasant as to love him. The unbelieving soul sees no beauty, nor worth in Christ, and is captivated with every thing, but the glory of the Redeemer God. There is nothing lovely to a carnal eye, in the Lord of Glory. How different apprehensions have those souls, that are made light in the Lord; who have seen their own guilt

guilt and misery; their own vileness and unworthiness; their lost and undone state; and who come to him, as an all-sufficient and willing Saviour. Wherever there is deep contrition for sin, there will always exist strong affection to Christ. It is a feeling sense of approaching ruin, and a believing apprehension of Christ's alacrity and willingness to recover the soul from this awful state, that first win the heart and draw forth the love of the soul to Jesus. Wherever excellence and loveliness reside, we naturally feel love towards them; but what are all the excellence and loveliness scattered among the creatures? In Jesus all beauty and excellence dwell, in an infinite degree; he is Immanuel, or God with us. View his divine nature. In him the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily. View him in his mediatorial glory, and what perfection and beauty appear! He was full of grace and truth. A great part of this loveliness of the Redeemer arises from his suitableness in every office he bears, to the sinner. The convinced sinner sees all the excellence and worth of Christ, every way suitable and proper for him. As a sinner, he rejoices in the name, Saviour, which he bears; as an ignorant creature, he sees in him a suitable Prophet, and hears him in all things; as a sinful and guilty creature, he sees his atonement every way fit and proper to cleanse him from all sin; as a weak and impotent creature, he rejoices in him as mighty to save; he sees him as the great channel of conveying to his soul righteousness and strength; peace and pardon; light and life, grace and glory. The more knowledge that is imparted to the soul, by the word and Spirit, the more entirely does it acquiesce in him; the more entirely are the affections of the heart centered in him. The Christian at last is brought to rely on him, as his durable portion; as his eternal life and salvation.

3. This love, in the souls of the redeemed, arises from a believing view of his union with, and relation to them. This is the true nature of all love. It unites the heart to the object beloved. Earnest and strong

strong desires are the ties that bind the heart in love to Christ: "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God! Whom have I in heaven but thee, O Lord; and there is none in all the earth I desire besides thee." Thus the redeemed feel and love him, as nearly united to them; and they behold him filling up the most tender relations to their souls: they see him as their brother, and friend; their Saviour and their God.

4. This divine affection in the soul is much increased and strengthened, by enjoying frequent converse and communion with Christ. The more intimate we are with any person beloved, and the more frequent our communion and intercourse, the more we love him. In like manner it is with the soul that has fellowship with Jesus Christ. Every view of him in his word; every sight of him in his ordinances; every visit we make him, by prayer, at a throne of grace; every blessing that brings us near to the enjoyments of his presence, adds strength and fervency to our love. John, of all the apostles, was most intimate with Christ; he had much communion with him; he was the disciple that leaned on Christ's bosom. May not this account for that glow of love, which runs through all his writings, and animates his heart in dwelling on the love of God. A soul that loves Christ cannot bear to live at a distance from him. The believer may be happy in the possession and enjoyment of other things, but none of them afford that comfort he feels when he has fellowship with him, who is altogether lovely. A soul counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and loves communion with him above all enjoyments; such a soul loves his ordinances—because they are the banqueting house, where he often refreshes and strengthens the heart. The believer loves the privileges of the gospel, because they are the purchase of Christ, and lead the affections to him.

5. The soul that loves Christ feels a real satisfaction

tion and complacency in him that influences the heart to devote itself to his service. Satisfaction in the person beloved, and a devotedness to him are inseparably connected with the existence of true love in the soul. "To them that believe, Jesus Christ is also precious." In every point of light they consider him, they are satisfied and well pleased with all the names, offices, and characters he bears; and they rejoice in his service.

But to be more particular, we shall now enumerate the properties of the love of the redeemed to Christ. Indeed this love, where it really exists, is distinguished by many properties; and by them we may know the degree of our love to him,

1. It is a superlative and transcendent love. Jesus Christ, on account of his essential glory and personal perfections, deserves our first and highest love. On him is placed the Father's love; on him angels fix their highest regard; on him the saints, in all ages, have rested their supreme affection. The more his nature is known, and the more his beauty and glory appears, the more will the believing heart love him. He infinitely excels all creatures, and ought, therefore, to be loved with the supreme affections of the heart. He is to be loved above father, or mother, sister, or brother; above the world, riches and honours. Did not Jesus love poor sinners above all things? Did he not sacrifice his own reputation among men to their honour? Did he not love them more than his own life? What more reasonable than that he should have the highest place in our hearts? He is the king of glory, and looks for the throne of our souls. "My Son, give me thy heart." Prov, xiii. 26. Say, Christian! Is he not worthy of your love? Has he not so acted towards you, in every respect, as to deserve your first affections? You may and ought to love, with a subordinate affection, your near and intimate relations; But none of these ever did or could do for you what Christ has done: none of them

them ever died for you. He laid down his life to purchase your love. At the dearest rate, has he purchased it, and of all others, he most deserves it. "O love the Lord all ye his saints."

2. It is a sincere and hearty love. In Eph. vi. 24. the apostle prays: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity." We learn from the prophet, Jer. iii. 10. that it was the great sin of Judah, that she turned not to the Lord with her whole heart, but feignedly. He is not a Christian that loves the Lord of glory, merely in word and outward profession; while he feels no sincere and cordial love to him. Contemplating the sincere and cordial love which Christ has manifested to the soul of men, the Christian feels the necessity of loving him with an upright mind. The humiliations to which he subjected himself; the reproaches and sufferings he endured; the agonies he felt; and the death to which he submitted; all concur to convince the believer that Christ must have loved him, with the most unfeigned and sincere love. To return hypocritical love; to give him either a low, or partial place in our affections, would argue and prove that we possessed the most ungrateful heart. What should have become of us, if Jesus had not been sincere in the expressions of his love to us? And what think you shall be our doom, if we be found insincere in our love to him? If we love the world, riches, honours, sin, or vanity with more cordial affections than we love the Lord Jesus Christ, what fearful judgements must await us? Remember the question our Lord himself put to Peter: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Peter, though he had shamefully denied his Lord, after having wept bitterly for his transgression, now appeals to the omniscience of Christ, for the sincerity of his love: "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love, thee." Think, Christian! he sees, he searches, and tries the hearts of the children of men; he knows the

the real temper of your heart ; he is acquainted with the condition of your soul. Whether does Jesus see hypocrisy or sincerity of affection to him existing there ? Is there any sin, any worldly idol, any rival, that frequently steals away your heart from him ? Are you uneasy at the divided state in which he has your love ? Are you grieved that your hearts are not more right with God ? Do you think much upon him ; or is he seldom in your thoughts ? Do you delight to converse much with those things that bring the remembrance of his name near your hearts ? While you are waiting on God, and seeking him in his ordinances, are you uneasy and dissatisfied with every thing, until you have found him whom your soul love ? How do your hearts answer these questions ? Right and positive answers will help you greatly to determine the sincerity of your love. Happy are you if you can say, it is the habitual desire of your soul to love him without dissimulation, with a pure heart fervently. Happy are you, if your great complaint be, that you love him too little ; and that too much weakness and languor cleave to your attachments to the dear Redeemer.

3. This love to Jesus is of a growing nature ; the grace of the Spirit, like other graces, is capable of great improvement. As the Christian's knowledge of Christ increases, his love to the Saviour grows and increases. Do you experience more of his goodness now than formerly ? Have you a more enlarged sense of what he is in himself, and what he has, and is doing for you ; and ought not the habit of love to keep pace with the experience of his mercy ? The oftener you read of him in the word ; the oftener you are called to see his ways of providence ; the oftener he communicates fresh tokens of his grace and love to you ; the oftener he hears and answers your prayers ; the oftener he makes goodness pass before your eyes ; say, are not your feelings of love improved and strengthened ? Every mercy you receive must remain

you of his love, and draw out the affection of your hearts to him. This is agreeable to the experience of the most eminent saints of Christ. It may not have that glow and heat that marks the love of young converts; but it has, what as clearly proves its growing vigour, a calmness, a steadiness, and firmness: these mark its improvement; and show, that, from the smallest sparks, it may increase till it grow into a settled and steady warmth of affection, that animates the Christian in every duty of life. Do you not see this progressive and growing nature of divine love clearly marked in the conduct of Nicodemus, and the other disciples? Nicodemus had but a small spark of love to Jesus, when he came to him by night. But, small as it was, it grew stronger and stronger; and we find him at a scene which proved the strength of his affection—he goes with Joseph to beg the body of Christ. He is not ashamed before the world, before his fellow rulers, to show his attachment to the Saviour. His disciples give proofs of their growing love and affection to Christ, as their dangers increased; as their worldly temptations were removed; as their persecutions were multiplied; as their discouragements from Satan and the world grew; we find them more firm in love; more bold and determined in the cause of their divine master. Blessed is that soul, whose love waxeth stronger and stronger to him “who is altogether lovely.”

4. It is constant and universal love. Jesus, who is the object of his people's love, is a constant and universal good; and the more he is apprehended as such by the soul, the more constant and persevering will the affection of the heart be to him. The love that subsists between creature and creature is variable and changeable. The warmest love, and firmest friendships are often changed into the keenest hatred and resentments. There are also hypocritical and deceitful lovers of Christ, who pretend to feel, and

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who express great love for him; but because their love is not cordial, it is subject to change. Loving sin and the world more than him, they soon are seen to walk no more with him. But where true love to the Saviour is shed abroad in the heart, it is a steady and constant affection, that at all times and seasons rests upon Christ as its beloved object. It may not be always in lively exercise; but it never dies, or leaves the heart. Nothing can separate the believer from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus. Even when the Redeemer afflicts his children, they kiss the rod and him that appointeth it. They love the Saviour not only in the day of prosperity, when the candle of the Lord shineth on them; but they love him when all his waves go over them. The language of a heart under the real influence of love is, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." The true believer finds that Christ changeth not in his love to his people. "Whom he loves, he loves unto the end." From this they learn how constantly they should love him.

Besides this, it is universal love. A true believer loves all of Christ; loves all his names, offices, and characters; loves all that belongs to him. His love is to those that bear his image; to the excellent ones of the earth; the redeemed among men. If the image of Christ appear stamped on their conversation and deportment, this is a sure foundation, and above all things attracts their love and unites their hearts to them as brethren. Let them be high or low, rich or poor, it matters nothing; as Christ has loved them, so they become real objects of esteem and love to the people of God. This love extends itself to all his commands and ordinances. A true believer feels an inward satisfaction of soul when he is called to attend on these. They remind him of his Saviour; they bring his heart near to God. It is his delight to seek after God; and all the days of his life he wishes to seek after him; to behold the beauty

of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. Those that have loved Jesus most, have, in every age, been most diligent in reading his word, in prayer, meditation, and in honouring the Sabbaths and institutions of the Lord: such are the properties of the love Christians feel to Christ.

It remains that I improve this subject.

I. Is it not of importance that each of you now seriously examine your own hearts, and ask yourselves whether you have ever felt this love to Jesus? Do you love those things that bring you into the presence of Christ? Wherever true love exists, there will always be a desire to enjoy much of the presence of the person beloved. The soul dwells much where it has fixed its love. Just so it is with the real child of God. His thoughts are often busied in the contemplation of Christ. Christ lives in glory; the believer dwells as yet on earth: but it is not the distance between earth and heaven that can divide their hearts, or separate them. While the Saviour was on earth, those that loved him most, were found most frequently in his company. Those that still love him will be frequently thinking of him, approaching his presence, and sending up their hearts to him in glory. Their souls, even in this distant land, will be more familiar and acquainted with their crucified Saviour, as all their light, and life, and hope. Again,

Examine yourselves whether your hearts are crucified to sin and the world. If you hate not sin, it is a melancholy sign that you love not our Lord. True love to him will make you love what he loves, and hate what he hates. Now sin is that abominable thing which he hateth, and therefore, it will be loathed, hated, and shunned by every true lover of the Redeemer. Divine love will also crucify your hearts to the world. The love of the world and the love of Christ are opposite to each other; they cannot dwell in the same breast. Every thing that comes in competition

petition with Christ will be sacrificed to him, will be given up for the honour of his name. There is nothing that a lover of Jesus will count too precious to part with for his cause and interest. He will go through every obstacle, every sacrifice, every trial, to manifest the love of his soul to Christ, and rejoice that they will at last bring him to the bosom of his Redeemer. Moreover,

Living hearts are hearts zealous for the glory of Christ. The concerns of the poor sinner lay near the heart of Christ. He was zealous for every thing that could make the soul happy. Is it possible for the heart of the redeemed to remain cool and unconcerned about his cause, his truth, his honour, and glory in the world? No; whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, we will do it to the glory of his name. His cause will be near our hearts, in every prayer we offer up; in every word we speak in every action we perform. Whatever station in life we occupy, we will lay out the influence and authority of that station in exalting his name, and magnifying his salvation in the earth.

H. Need I exhort the people of God to express from time to time, their cordial love to Christ.

1. Consider what Jesus is in himself; view his divine greatness and majesty—he is the Lord of glory, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. The angels in heaven love him and ever obey his commands; he is head over all things for the good of his church. View his holiness and purity; his wisdom and knowledge; his truth and faithfulness; his fulness, and sufficiency; and say, is he not a fit and worthy object of your love? You throw away your love, if you fix it on the perishing and temporal enjoyments of sense: but consider how wisely it is placed when it centers in Christ.

2. Consider what Christ will do for you: he will love them that love him. Think what is implied in this. To have an interest in the love of Christ, is

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will possess the highest hopes and to enjoy the greatest blessedness. He will never leave you, nor forsake you; he will ever protect you; he will counsel and guide you; he will at last make you a joint heir with himself. In glory you shall share in his riches, possessions, and bliss. Death, that separates you from all friends and all worldly bliss, shall bring you near to Christ, and to rest for ever with him in the bosom of eternal felicity.

3. Consider it is your privilege and honour to be allowed to love Christ. Do you not think it both a duty and a privilege for a child to love a parent; and is it not much more, Christians! your privilege and duty to love your Redeemer? The love of our hearts is due to Christ; it is a debt that every redeemed sinner owes him. Will you not ascribe the glory that is due unto his name? Will you not pay the debt of love you owe to him?

In the last place, let me address those whose hearts are yet destitute of the love of Christ. Reflect on the dreadful nature of your crime and its consequence. Every part of the scripture teaches us, that it is not a trifling matter to live without love to Christ in the world. No ingratitude like that which lightly esteems the rock of salvation. As Christ is the unspeakable gift of God; to despise him, to live without love to him, is a sin that must carry in its bosom *unspeakable* guilt. It is the peculiar sin of infernal spirits, to live without love to Christ; to oppose him, to hate him. Strange! that there should be one sinner in the world that should feel as devils feel; that should act their part, and discover the same rooted opposition. Is it right, think you, O careless sinner! to commit such treason, such rebellion, against Christ. Believe me, ere it be too late, the sun beholds not a blacker crime, a more detestable heart, than a heart full of implacable bitterness and enmity to Christ; and as the guilt is signal, so the punishment reserved for it, will doubtless be equally signal. Are you thinking

how absolutely necessary it is for you to possess this grace. It is not absolutely needful for you to get riches and honours in the world; these you may want and yet go to heaven. There are many who were poor saints on earth, now rich in glory. But if you have not the love of Christ, do you think of ever being admitted there? Was there ever a soul that went to heaven without love to Christ? You may live poorly in the world, and yet live happily if your hearts are chiefly set on Christ. You may be destitute of worldly comforts, and at last be an heir of glory. But if love to Christ inhabit not your soul you shall never be an inhabitant of heaven. With spirits and devils damned you shall dwell in the regions of hatred and eternal wo. "For if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema." "Maran-atha."

SERMON XIV.

HOSEA viii. 3.

*Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him *.*

THE scriptures contain the principal events of providence with respect to the human race; and they are all intended to impress our minds with a deep and solemn sense of the justice and wisdom of him "who worketh in secret." No actor appears.—No individual is described.—The fate of no nation recorded, but what is designed to convey useful and *certain* instruction to future times. The obscurity into which the revolutions and events of profane history are involved, lessens its value and importance. Distracted amidst conjecture and misrepresentation, amidst truth and falsehood, we derive little satisfaction or improvement: but in the sacred volume, truth is ever presented to our view. The causes that uniformly contribute to private and public happiness; the circumstances that as uniformly occasion private and public misery, are pointed out with certainty and precision. The Almighty, while he publishes his laws

* This Sermon, which was entitled, "The living manners of the times, and their consequences; together with the motives to reformation," was preached at Edinburgh on the 9th of February, 1779, being the day appointed for a General Fast.

to men, publishes at the same time his firm and steady execution of them. National virtue is ever accompanied with national happiness; national corruption with national misery. When "Israel hath cast off the thing that is good, the enemy shall pursue him." Inconsiderate, often insatuated, we are averse to listen to the voice of providence. But there are moments when the most thoughtless and obstinate cannot prevent serious reflection from forcing its way into the human mind. The brilliancy of life, like the splendor of the sun, may, for a short time, dazzle and darken the eye of reason; but the season will come, sooner or later, when the individual shall find himself compelled to view things without any false or deceitful colouring, to reflect on every circumstance connected with his perilous situation. There are also periods, when a nation may be loudly called by the voice of providence, by the complexion of the times, to reflect deeply on the dangerous symptoms of its decline. "When it hath cast off the thing that is good, the enemy, (i.e. the ruinous consequences of degeneracy,) shall follow it."

To declaim against the age is deemed by many to be mere invective; the perpetual task of sournels of temper, joined to illiberal views of things. In order to avoid this censure, we shall endeavour to clothe our observations in the language of "sobriety and truth." Vice has been common to every age; it has deformed the history of every nation; but there are not surely wanting, what may be called *living manners*, to justify the severest animadversions. To describe these; to compare them with the spirit that animated former periods of our history; and to point out the cure; with the motives that ought to influence each of us to turn unto the Lord, is then the present design.

The first distinguishing feature of our age, that strikes the most superficial observer, is that extravagance and luxury which prevails so universally; the parent of almost every other enormity. All ranks of people

seem to vie with one another in their stately buildings, sumptuous apparel, expensive amusements, and the delicacies of a costly table. The tinsel and show of life seem now to be the object of universal pursuit. The industry of our fathers, the extent of our commerce, and the acquisition of our arms, have put us in possession of all the materials of luxury; and we have indeed given unrestrained indulgence to every kind of extravagance. The infection has seized the lowest as well as the highest departments of society. Its effects appear in the cottage as well as in the palace. The wealth that was formerly employed in affording relief to the indigent; in making the orphan's countenance smile, and the widow's heart sing for joy, is now consumed in gratifying human vanity, and in supporting the glitter of a frivolous and unmeaning life. The riches applied by our frugal ancestors to the erections of nurseries for the young, seats of literature for the studious, and retreats for the aged and infirm, are now destined to flow in the channels of dissipation. Instead of these useful buildings, at once the ornament of our isle, and the fruit of wise oeconomy, houses of amusements are patronized; which, if they have not an immediate, have at least a secondary tendency to weaken the nerves of national virtue.

In consequence of which, idleness, and aversion to every laborious acquisition now begin too powerfully to operate. Those hours which were formerly, by those who give the tone to society, devoted to the attainment of useful and manly knowledge, are now wasted in learning the science of seduction, or the language of gay, but insipid circles. The bent of modern education evidently leans to what is showy rather than to what is substantial. Devout sentiments, and the discipline which religion requires, are considered in a secondary and inferior view. Hence we account for the general decay and relaxed state of morals. Hence that want of sincerity in conversation, which is also peculiarly characteristic of our times.

It

It is now vain to measure the friendship of the heart by the words the tongue is taught to utter. How seldom do we find that plainness and sincerity which prompt us to speak as we think. Dissimulation and compliment are become so prevalent, that men's words bear hardly any resemblance to their thoughts. "We speak vanity every one with his neighbour; with flattering lips and a double heart do we speak." That integrity of nature; that honesty of disposition, which always argues a true greatness of mind, is adulterated by the introduction of foreign manners; by a servile imitation of a neighbouring nation, that has but too often laboured both to lessen our glory by its arms, and to corrupt our taste and morals by its fluctuating fashions.

Of course, that masculine strength and vigour of mind, the necessary effects of pure and uncorrupted principles, now begin to decline. Feebleness and effeminacy mark our manners, and diffuse their pernicious influence through the seats of wisdom, and the field of honour. Those moments, when heroes braved danger; when, animated with a love of liberty, and proud to appear in the defence of religion, they carried the glory of our arms into the most distant climes, and made the enemies of British liberty and the Protestant religion tremble, are now viewed with an affectionate but painful sigh. Legislators planned their country's well. Then a warlike and patriotic spirit glowed in every breast; and secured to us those invaluable blessings which many of their descendants seem so much to despise. But instead of the spontaneous efforts of their disinterested minds, and those great events that corresponded with such generous and patriotic feelings; what do we now behold but the *selfish wish*, and a train of such events must damp the spirits of the most sanguine; as must convince us that the battle is not to the strong, nor success always found on the side of justice.

Having viewed what will be gently pronounced by

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ome, only the foibles, let us now survey the *crimes* of the age.

An eminent monarch, admired for his wisdom by succeeding generations, once declared: "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach of any people." Enervated by luxury, giddy with pleasure and amusements, unformed by severe and attentive study, immersed in folly and distraction, we seem to act as if the reverse of the proposition were true: "Righteousness is the reproach of a nation; but sin exalteth any people." We now spurn at the precepts of religion, as fit only for the slaves of gloomy superstition. That awful sense of the supreme Being, which gave a dignity and solemnity to the manners of our ancestors, is scarcely felt. Religion, which was formerly considered as the first and principle basis, is now deemed by too many modern, but shallow politicians, as the useless burden of society. Once, if the storm of war arose; once, if the battle kindled; if armies were levied; they were to guard and defend the interests of religion. The same tumults and din of arms are now heard. As numerous and frequent forces are raised; but their destination is to defend the materials of luxury, to increase the sources of degeneracy, and to exhibit the show of a great and shining name; while, alas! too much of the substance is gone. Formerly, religion cemented every stone of our political edifice. It gave integrity to the counsellor; a spirit of justice to the judge. It even increased the magnanimity of the soldiers; and the statesman did not blush to acknowledge its influence in adjusting the interests, and preserving the sacred rights of contending nations.

But why dwell in the higher departments of society, when we have but too much room for complaint against those who fill the humblest and most ordinary stations of life. The capital springs being corrupted, have spread their corruption through the smallest streams. Were we to describe that want of principles; that

that degeneracy of morals; were we to enumerate the works of darkness; to lay open those recesses of impurity, where every manly and rational feeling is lost, a loathsome picture might be drawn. But more visible effects of the decay of religion offer themselves. The open streets, our most public places exhibit the *triumphs* of impiety. Those names which claim our most awful and affectionate veneration, are prostituted to the lowest and meanest purposes. We seem to have forgotten the denunciation of the prophet "Because of swearing the land mourneth." To this impious familiarity with the sacred name of the Almighty, we may ascribe the origin and increase of perjury; which ceases, from its commonness, to create that surprise or indignation, which such deep iniquity deserves. Neither the belief of an invisible Judge, who will yet punish those, who "with their tongues" "have used deceit;" nor the presence and dignity of an earthly tribunal, can overawe the consciences of men.

But why need we wonder, when we consider the rapid progress of infidelity among those whose province it is to *guide*, not to *mislead* mankind from truth. Frequent have been the attempts to destroy the evidence upon which Christianity is built. But the efforts of infidels proving unsuccessful in this quarter, have of late been chiefly applied to deny, or adulterate the precious doctrines of Christianity. In opposition to the accumulated wisdom of ages; to the sober opinion of mankind; to the laws of their country; in contempt of the laws of heaven, the patrons of infidelity openly avow and disseminate their corrupting principles. They are eager to build their cobweb systems on the ruin of unerring and venerable truth. The progress of infidelity is the more to be lamented, when we reflect on another striking feature of our times, that indifference and unconcern into which too many of us are unhappily sunk. That caution and zeal, that

animating

animating vigour of mind, which delighted in bold sentiments, is now degenerated into luke warmness and timidity. To preserve our best and dearest rights:—To establish these on permanent foundations, our forefathers met the rage of the fierce persecutor, wandered about in dens and caves of the earth, spilt their best blood, and spent their richest treasures; and yet many of their descendents ungratefully attempt to depreciate the costly fruits of their labours. The whole strength of their reasoning amounts to this :

Since the storms of winter are abated, let us pull down those shelters that covered us from its fury; since war is succeeded by peace, let us overthrow our strong holds and bulwarks of defence. But the indifference of some, the credulity of others, the poverty of our country, and the profligacy of many, ought to redouble our zeal to keep unimpaired the fences of religion; lest the storm yet arise; lest the bloody sword of persecution once more approach our dwellings.—But while we contend earnestly for the faith, let our zeal be according to knowledge. The wisdom from above is pure, gentle, *peaceable*. Gratitude to the struggles of our ancestors, our duty to posterity, the great principles of self-preservation, justify every decent and prudent method to *prevent*, but the spirit of Christianity forbids us to *stir up* the flames of persecution. Riot and tumult disgrace the *best*; and are never employed by the base, in supporting the worst of causes. While therefore, we use our influence against the *principles*, forbid that a *Protestant* arm should ever be so mean as injure the person or property of our ancient and inveterate foes in a lawless manner. Let the *chief* instruments of our defence, and of their defeat, ever be the purity of our principles, the holiness of our lives, and a zeal to preserve the spirit of "pure and undefiled" religion in the world.

We have the more need to be thus minded, when we see how fashionable it is become with many, not only to discover an indifference, but a total neglect of

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public worship; the most daring violation of the duties of the Lord's day. Pleasure with many is become the great business of life; and that day which ever ought to be set apart to commemorate the resurrection of our Saviour, and for enriching our minds with religious knowledge, is generally that portion of time dedicated to dissipation and folly, to amusement, or in arranging the business of the succeeding week. How much are the sacred institutions of religion despised! How much are those means designed to lift our thoughts above the vanity of life, and to fix them on that joy which is unspeakable, and full of glory, now neglected! To enter the house of God is as irksome to many as entering a dungeon. To join in the social worship of the Father of the universe, and Saviour of mankind, is the bitterness of gall to their mind. Untutored by pious and sober education, and ever surrounded with levity, they neither know, nor regard the God of their fathers. They would blush and be covered with shame, were they discovered employed in the solemn acts of religious worship; in adoring that God, whose gifts they are abusing, whose time they are wasting, whose talents they are debasing, whose majesty they are insulting! Amazing impiety! Thus to pour contempt on what even Pagans have deemed necessary; on what the most ignorant, as well as the most enlightened nations have considered as the most effectual method of preserving a sense of religion in the world.

Different were the sentiments of our forefathers. They were literally "in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" "calling the Sabbath a delight; not doing their own ways; nor finding their own pleasures, nor speaking their own words." Joined by those under their domestic care, they ushered in the day with praise and prayers to God. They were proud to appear in the courts of the Lord. The external gravity of the countenance bespoke the seriousness and attention of the mind to divine things. Impressed with awe and reverence

reverence they retired from the sanctuary of God, perfumed with the incense of devotion, and concluded the day in the manner they had begun, by expressing gratitude to heaven, and by seasoning the minds of those committed to their trust with early and deep impressions of religion. Then decency reigned in our streets. The riot and noise of the tavern were unknown. Recreation and amusement were less anxiously pursued.

But is there no ground of complaint, it may be asked with a sneer by some libertine, against the *gally ones* of the age? Why pour all your invectives upon us who are honest enough to avow our sentiments, and spare spiritual pride, dark hypocrisy; those who, while they have the *forms*, feel as little of the *power* of godliness as we — Often, it must be confessed, has deep depravity been concealed under a fair and shining appearance; and too many instances still occur to surprise us, to convince us of human frailty, and to wound religion in the house of her friends. The profession and practice of religion are still so much separated in many instances, as to make no inconsiderable blemish of the present times; and therefore deserve the censure both of the serious and profligate. Honourable were it for religion, that this was the only mark of depravity among the *pretended* disciples of Christ. But other vices besides this have of late defiled the sanctuary. Instead of cultivating the manly and rational spirit of devotion, time has been wasted in "*vain babbling*," that tends not to edify the body of Christ. Wherever these exist, the vital and animating warmth of religion ceases to be felt. Mere performance of external worship; a system of speculative opinions, which float in the head without ever sinking into the heart, like clouds that float in the air, without descending in showers to fertilise the earth; high looks, because of imaginary sanctity; a spirit of severity; a harshness and acrimony of speech in judging of the manners and character of others

others, constitute, in too many cases the whole of religion. The posture of the body, the motion of the lips, not the feelings and disposition of the heart form the spirit of our prayers and praise. Candour and humility too seldom mingle their influence with the business and transactions of life.

Such then are the *living manners* of the times. The view which we have taken is in many respects defective and superficial. The picture, without being more particular, is sufficiently dismal; and we will have but too much reason to think so, when we have described its effects, which now remains to be done.

The national habits that now exist, tend to enfeeble the powers of the mind; to fetter them with indolence and inactivity; to wear out the traces of manly dignity, and to prepare us for becoming the dupes of ignorance and of arbitrary power. So long as Rome was *virtuous*, Rome was *free*. Want of discipline introduced luxury; luxury weakened the great and invigorating principles of action; listlessness and unconcern prevailed; vice spread its poison slowly through the state: Like a moth or a worm it consumed in secret, till political death ensued. If we be found in the same predicament, will not the same consequences follow? Liberty, the pride and boast of our isle, was at first purchased by religion; and will ever be preserved by those sentiments it inspires, by those habits it forms. Whereas irreligion and ignorance, levity and dissipation, pave the way for arbitrary edicts; for those rigorous tribunals that throw a gloom over society for that confusion and wild uproar which has shaken the pillars of the firmest empires.

When these fatal moments arrive, our extensive trade must be lost; credit must languish where it has no support from law and equity; property must be at the disposal of the capricious and despotic. But these are trivial evils, when compared

with the loss of "pure and undefiled religion." Its influence in diffusing health and vigour through the state must be suspended; and its spirit enervated or lost in the rubbish of superstition, folly, and idolatry. In this manner does the Almighty, by the ordinary methods of chastisement, punish a corrupted nation. But when a whole people become bold in iniquity; when they become singularly vicious and degenerate, singular and supernatural evils are inflicted by the hand of God. And wretched is that nation when his arm is lifted up against it! Do the instances of degeneracy which we have mentioned, give no alarm to our breast? So fallen, so lost to religion, have we no reason to dread the vengeance of heaven? Is not his justice as inflexible now, his holiness as pure, his hatred of sin as great, and his power to crush the guilty, as invincible as in former periods? Has he visited the crimes of the individual with his chastening rod, and will he permit "a seed of evil doers" to pass with impunity? "The Lord hath prepared his throne for judgement, and he will judge the world in righteousness; he shall minister judgement to the people in uprightness. He shall destroy the wicked, and put out their name forever and ever." These are the threatenings of the Almighty: And let the flood, the plagues of Egypt, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the captivity of the Jews, their final subversion; let the pestilence and famines, the wars and earthquakes, teach us the manner in which the Almighty administers the cup of his wrath to a people "whose hearts are fully set in them to do evil."

Dreadful is the situation of that kingdom when Omnipotence is its enemy! For the Almighty can employ every element in nature to its destruction: he can send forth the tempest and the storm, the wind and the hurricane, to deform its glory, and to lay its pride and honour in the dust. The animals are also at his command. How often has he made

the caterpillar and the locusts messengers of his indignation. But the instruments of his avenging arm are not confined to the natural and animal world. If conquerors appear with the destroying scourge in their hands; if the calamities of war prevade the earth, it is to punish general profligacy and corruption of manners.

Doubtless with this view the judgements of God at this moment appear in the distracted and tumultuous state of our empire. Trusting too much in the arm of flesh; loaded with national guilt; scarce ever considering the superintendency of heaven, we have met, alas! disappointment where we expected success; loss, where we expected gain; shame where we expected honour. Anxiety in every breast at home; rage and resentment abroad; poverty and decline of trade; property in a sinking, staggering and fluctuating condition, all proclaim aloud the judgements of heaven.

Every thing wears an unpromising, but, I trust in God, not a desperate aspect. The perfidy of an old and hereditary enemy; the obstinacy and insatiation of colonies, in refusing the constitutional offers of the parent state; offers which they once begged with tears;—which we have now made with penitence; and the apprehensions of having another catholic power employed to bring us still farther down from our seat of political importance; all conspire to make the present period critical and unfortunate. But distress ennobles the character of the individual; gives room for the exercise of the most heroic virtues; and thereby sheds a lustre around it. Why should it not have the same happy effect upon us as a nation? Why should it not call forth our magnanimous exertions, and dissipate that gloom which has too long clouded our glory?

Let us then, in this season of danger and alarm, look up for strength and wisdom to him “by whom alone kings reign, and princes decree justice.”

Why

Why should we despair? On former occasions, "has he not brought us out by his mighty power, and by his out-stretched arm, from the snares of our adversaries? Yea, has he not lifted us up above those that rose up against us? Has he not delivered us from violent men?"

Such, then, is our disease; such, then, are its effects. Such are the engines of distress which may be employed by the Almighty. "Such are the enemies which may pursue us."

Thus distempered, ought we not to search for suitable remedies; to remove the causes, that the effects may also cease; by our repentance and amendment, to avert the righteous judgements of heaven, imploring its protection and favour.

A description different from what I have now given has been often attempted; but the colouring is deceitful. A consumptive person seldom believes that the seeds of mortality are working so deep in his frame. While every other person sees his decay visible, he alone remains unconvinced. Persuaded, therefore, that we have drunk deep at poisonous streams, it becomes us now to imbibe such salutary draughts, as will infuse health and vigour into our declining frame.

Let us then endeavour to correct our errors by an attentive survey of the fate, the manners, and history of former times. Much more solid instruction will be derived from this source of intelligence, than from those novel, light, and vicious books, which are circulated among us. And while those heroes who bled in their country's cause, to maintain its civil and religious rights, pass in review before us, let us catch their spirit, be great like them in honouring God, and doing good to mankind.

The simplicity of their manners will darken and expose the glare of modern refinement. The integrity of their lives will put to the blush that flattery and dissimulation which is too prevalent amongst us.

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Their sanctity of conduct will teach us, in a practical manner, how much we are fallen. Their fear of God will reproach our disregard of his divine majesty. In this manner, may one age teach another wisdom. In possession of much experience, having acted in almost every situation, they have, as it were, a parental authority to admonish the succeeding generation of men.

Let us also derive instruction from the page of sacred history, and imitate the conduct of those nations, who averted the wrath of heaven, by repenting in sackcloth and ashes. Covered with so many sorrows, distressed in so many parts, let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. And while we feel deep contrition for past offences; while the heart rends, and the eyes flow in secret, "let us turn unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon us," and unto our God, who will abundantly pardon. Let each of us, in our several stations, be careful for nothing but to "bring forth in our lives the peaceable fruits of righteousness." For if the reformation of the individual takes place, the purity and perfection of the whole must follow. And while we thus exhort ourselves, let us send up our earnest and constant prayers to that God who ruleth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, who can, by his grace and Spirit, prevent a nation from ruin, as easily as he can arrest an individual in his mad career of wickedness; imploring, that such "times of refreshing may now come from his presence; that those who are dead in trespasses and sins may be created again unto good works, and walk in newness of life."

Let us not trust in human means, either for national reformation or national glory. — Councils may be wise; but, for our crimes, the Almighty may defeat them. Armies may be powerful for restoring the blessing of peace; but, by his frown, "their hearts may be made faint and their ruin made

"plotted."

plied." Our resolutions "for perpetuating safety and prosperity" may be vigorous, but "who can stand when *Jehovah* sets the point of his sword against our gates."

"Putting our trust, therefore, in Almighty God, let us reverently and devoutly pray, that he may vouchsafe a special blessing on our arms, both by sea and land."

Let also the terrors of the Lord persuade us to walk no longer in the counsel of the ungodly, to stand in the way of sinners, or sit in the seat of the scornful."——To strike the guilty with fear, and "to make them stand in awe and be still," the Scriptures represent the judgements of God, by figures borrowed from the most awful objects in nature. They are compared to the devouring of a lion;—to the desolations of an overflowing flood;—to the fire of a furnace; to the besom of destruction.——

Let us then "foresee the evil, and hide ourselves. Let us escape for our lives from the error of the wicked, lest we be consumed."

But nobler motives than the terrors of the Lord ought to influence our conduct. A recollection of those numerous blessings poured down on our land, ought to melt our hearts into tenderness and love. The hosts of Israel scarce ever experienced such signal interpositions. Often has the arm of *Jehovah* baffled the attempts of our enemies; often has it wrought marvellous things in our defence. From ignorance and superstition, to "the truth as it is in Jesus;" from slavery and despotism, to freedom, have we been raised. By the events of providence have we not been made the wonder, terror, and envy of surrounding nations? Having enjoyed such signal gifts, shall we forget the *Giver*? Shall his favour tend only to harden our hearts?

Dread of the divine vengeance is a strong and forcible motive to reformation. Gratitude to heaven for signal mercies received, still stronger. But, independent

pendent of these, there remains one which ever will have weight with generous and feeling minds;—*The love of our country, and a regard to posterity.*

Has the present, have the succeeding generations no claim on our activity, our integrity and zeal; and shall we transmit to them the fruits of indolence, corruption, and indifference?—Great and overflowing is the tide of iniquity; let us not increase it by the accession of our streams. Mighty are the mischiefs it has done, both to our civil and religious fabric. It has adulterated the one by “profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called;” which some professing have erred concerning the “faith.” It has overthrown the chief pillar of the other, by effacing from our minds that patriotic sentiment of an apostle, *Nemo of us liveth to himself.* In consequence of which, in many places they begin to totter.

Surprising, that the duration of our state should be measured by the lives of those who formed it. Scarce three score and ten years have elapsed since its formation; and now we see it wearing gray hairs and too many symptoms of old age.—What! Must it decline almost with the decline of those who reared it? As they drop off the stage, shall their virtues also drop off, and be buried in the same grave with them? Shall we allow the substance and spirit of their labours to evaporate in our hands?—No.—Let us, as Britons, vindicate the honour of our nation, by defeating the machinations both of perfidious, and insatuated foes. As Christians, let us preserve the purity of our religion, “by keeping *THAT* commandment “to our TRUST:” Watching when grievous wolves enter in among us, not sparing the flock, speaking “perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” Marking “them which cause divisions and offences,” contrary to the doctrines which ye have received, “and avoiding them:—being no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.”

doctrine, by the sleight of men and *cunning craftiness*, whereby they lie in wait to deceive:—Taking care lest any man spoil us through vain deceit, and after the *tradition of men*:—Letting no man deceive us by any means, especially that man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; for that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God. *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work*—Not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established? *Earnestly* contending for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints:” Remembering “if any worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” *Rev. xiv. 9, 10.* As men let us promote the wisdom and reformation of our time, by “a conversation becoming the gospel.”

If called to the senate of the nation, let us still labour *gloriously* with some great design. Let not the siles of those who guide the helm of state bias our judgements. Let not the *rage of party* weaken our concern for the public weal.

If called to the field of combat, let our conduct be marked with magnanimity and heroism; and once we exert ourselves to make the name of Britain terrible to our enemies, respected by our allies, and venerable to all.

If we are invested with the sword of power, let us wield it with spirit and justice, **IN DEFENCE OF TRUTH AND PEACE.**

If we stand at the head of a family, let us consider ourselves as appointed by God guardians of piety and patriotism; intrusted by our country with the education of those who are yet to be its firmest support, and instruments for transmitting the blessings of religion and liberty to future generations.—Ever persuaded, that the glory and prosperity of a country is proportioned

proportioned to the discipline of domestic care, let us
 "with delight, rear the tender thought,—teach the
 "young idea how to shoot,—pour instructions into
 "the tender mind—breathe the enlivening spirit,—
 "and fix, not only the *generous*, but also the *pious*
 "purpose in the glowing breast."

Thus, let us endeavour to stem the torrent of
 corruption, and strain every nerve, to regain the
 station from which we have been so fatally driven—
 Arduous indeed is the task; it is plying the oar against
 the stream. But it is our duty to be vigorous.
 Heaven will smile on our efforts! We have all con-
 tributed to *national guilt*; ought we not then all to
 contribute to *national holiness*? By the purity of our
 principles, by the innocence of our lives, by the sanctity
 of our manners, by the dignity of our conduct, by
 our fervent prayers, and devout wishes, let us adorn
 the doctrine of God our Saviour. Let us walk
 worthy of the vocation whereby we are called.
 And if it be beyond our power to *reform*, let us, by
 "letting our lights so shine before men," at least re-
 buke the age in which we live."

SERMON XV.

HAGGAI i. 7.

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways.

THE Almighty is never introduced by the prophets as addressing mortals without inculcating some serious and useful lesson. Such an admonition as the present would, indeed, require the highest authority to enforce it. From the mouth of man it would meet but with little regard in the world; from the voice of the Almighty it must then proceed. And even when "the Lord of Hosts" commands us from his throne "to consider our ways," such is the levity and thoughtlessness of the human heart, there is but too little attention paid to this unerring Monitor! Pride and self-deceit make us view our own characters with so much partiality, that we seldom think either of the necessity, or advantage of such a duty. Carried on by the impulse of present inclinations and appetites, we live without once considering the consequences of things. Many travel through life with unconcern, and never think of its value and impor-

* This Sermon was preached at Newcastle on the first of January, 1771, and soon after published. It was entitled, "The necessity and advantages of religious consideration recommended."

tance, till they are just about to leave it. The cares and tumults of the world seldom allow them leisure either to deliberate or reflect on their conduct. For want of consideration, the sinner proceeds in the path of iniquity, without ever thinking that his crimes are in opposition to an arm that can crush him to pieces; without ever thinking of his ingratitude to a benefactor that preserves him in existence; and of his rebellion, daring rebellion, against a Saviour, who bled and died for mankind. Were he in time to attend to the silent instructions of reason and solid wisdom—to that wisdom which cometh from above; were he to have his mind impressed with ideas of duty, all the miseries of an irregular and dissolute course might be easily prevented.

To enumerate, therefore, a few of the advantages resulting from Consideration; to shew the necessity of it to different characters, and at certain seasons of life, is, by the assistance of God, the design of the following discourse.

I. I mean to shew the necessity and advantage of *Consideration* to mankind in general, from the importance of the part we are all now acting.

The present system of things is evidently intended as an introduction to a succeeding and better one. "The fashion of this world passeth away; but there shall arise a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Amidst all the bustle, therefore, which we now behold, amidst all the variety of objects, which now attract our attention, there are only three questions in the solution of which we are much interested: What are we? Where are we? And, What is our final destination? Revelation alone gives us a satisfactory answer to each of these queries. It informs us, that the part we are now acting is not only connected with time, but with eternity; that this state of being is only the infancy of human nature.

SERMON XV.

ture, and that we are destined heirs of immortality. From this we may infer, that as every moment of our present life has an influence on each of our future states, so shall the sentiments we are now forming, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, have an effect upon our future happiness. The influence of the Divine Spirit is not a more certain and powerful influence upon the human mind, than this which is exerted upon the human body. If there be labour and sweat in the present life, there will be beauty and verdure in immortality. Beauty and verdure in summer, autumn seldom fails to fill our hearts with food and plenty. If, influenced by the Divine Spirit, "we add to our faith, virtue; if to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity;—we shall, at last, possess the peaceful fruits of righteousness."

Were death a termination to our hopes and fears, though Consideration, even upon this supposition, would be highly useful in the management of our ordinary affairs, yet it could not be of such singular and momentous consequence; but the moment we reflect that we are candidates for glory, honour and immortality, the eminent advantage of the most scrupulous circumspection will at once appear evident. When we die, we shall cease from our labours: in whatever way they have been spent, whether in the service of God, or in the paths of folly, their effects are to follow us. High and important, therefore, is the part we are now acting. However trifling it may appear to us, either angels now survey us as their future associates, or devils eye us as their fellow prisoners in the regions of despair. Although we should deem it insignificant, yet it is, at least, interesting in the sight both of heaven and hell: and do you not think it will appear equally interesting to us at a dying hour,

or when the solemnities of a future judgement are displayed before our eyes?

With what care and reflection, therefore, ought we to proceed through a life that carries in its womb such serious, infinite, and lasting consequences.

There is a particular period in our lives, when we generally make choice of some department in society, to which our inclination leads us. To appear in a useful and respectable light in this station, what labour do we not bestow? What assiduous care and application, what previous study and discipline, do we not pursue; and shall we remain indolent and inconsiderate about having our minds enriched with principles that are thus to operate for ever; in having our lives adorned with habits that are thus to extend their influence throughout eternity? Since this is the case, does it not become us, in every action we perform, to have an eye to those higher, to those ultimate and eternal interests, that are now depending—"to consider our ways," in every stage of our progress.

We have this day begun to add to the number of our years that we have already spent in the world. We cannot be better employed than ushering in such a valuable portion of our time with the most serious and devout Consideration on our ways. We have been permitted, by the determining power of Heaven, to see more days and years than what have been granted to many of our acquaintance, friends and relations. If we look back to the commencement of the period that is finished, how many of our beloved friends have we seen swept off the stage of life? Have not we seen generation succeeding generation, as wave succeeds wave?—Have we not seen, in the wide circle of our acquaintances, multitudes, like the leaves in Autumn, dropping into the grave; while we are left behind to witness the future harvest, that time is still to make among men! While we are thus permitted to remain, perhaps only to increase the triumphs of death this season, is it not incumbent on

to consider our ways; to begin with a serious resolution of redeeming the time; of so remembering our days, that we may apply our hearts to heavenly wisdom?

Years are those portions of time, when finished, we ought particularly to make a stand in life, both to recollect the events that are past, and to prepare for those that are still veiled in obscurity—over which the Divine Being has thrown a mist impenetrable to mortal eye. This is the season which we commonly set apart for the examination and arrangement of the state of our finances, and worldly concerns; it is surely much more becoming and necessary, to devote the beginning of another year to the examination of the state of our heavenly and eternal interests.—

"Days should speak," says Job, "and multitude of years should teach us wisdom."

Years, like those stones erected to describe the length of the way, and to regulate the pace and movement of the passenger, out to have a similar effect on every traveller through life.—The abode of man in this world has been often compared to a pilgrimage. The years that are past should remind him how much of his pilgrimage is finished, and make him more industrious and concerned about the remaining parts.—As we advance to the end of our present life, does it not become us to feel an anxiety about the next, proportioned to the shortness of the way, that lies before us? As every year is filled with such revolutions and catastrophies, ought not these to fix our thoughts on those objects that are not subject to change, or decay, and to lift us above the commotions and vanities of life? Have the hopes of heaven had this influence on our conduct? As we have retired from the beginning of our days, has our attachment to this world been duly tempered with the hope set before us? Has preparation for another state been properly mingled with the concerns and business of this? Has that happy moment, which

shall dissolve our connection with this scene of things when "we shall rest from our labours," been rendered familiar and agreeable to our minds? Has this year found us more steadfast and immovable, more abounding in the work of the Lord?—These are important questions; and it becomes every one, "whose breath is in his nostrils, whose life is but a span, whose foundation is in the dust," to give a speedy and decisive answer; lest those years approach, in which, if we have neglected the present, we shall have but too much reason to say, our souls take no pleasure!

Think how precious a gift time is! When once gone, it never returns! Consider that every moment is to be accounted for! Consider how short and uncertain it is! You have but to look back and to reflect how many in your remembrance have been suddenly called off the stage of life! How often have you stood surprised, when informed of the condition of your departed friends!

Think also how large a proportion of your days have been wasted in childhood, in the heat and folly of youth; how many of them have been employed in the pursuit of idle and frivolous amusements, before you turned your attention to the great objects and designs for which you were sent into the world. And this suggests what I intended, in the former place—to show the necessity and advantage of religious consideration to the young and rising generation!

Early consideration, to my young friends, will be confessed by all to be of singular service. Long life and length of days are probably before them. Their minds are as yet tender and pliant, unpolluted with much actual guilt, and uninfluenced by the false principles and vicious customs of the world. It is therefore, peculiarly graceful and becoming in them, by an early attention to conduct, now to prevent much future sorrow and remorse. If their minds

are impressed with a serious sense of religion ; of the great obligations they lie under to God, as their Creator ; of the strong and sacred ties that bind them to men ; there is a fair prospect of their usefulness, in the remainder of life.

Recollect, my young friends ! who it is that addresses you ; who it is that commands you to consider your ways.—It is that God, who brought you into existence ; who took care of you when you hung upon your mother's breast ; who has guided and guarded you from the womb ; who has made every morning and evening rejoice over you ; who alone can prosper your affairs in life ; who can render the number of your days happy, and your departure from the world comfortable. Will you not listen then to so serious and solemn an admonition, “ thus saith the Lord of Hosts, *consider your ways* ?”

To want of religious consideration, in our first outset in life, may be ascribed most, or all the miseries incident to man. But how often is this overlooked in the education of the tender mind ! Youth is a season too often marked with a peculiar levity and thoughtlessness, and the discipline of religion is seldom employed to check, or destroy it. But if it be uniformly spent at the shrine of folly, it is sure to pave the way for a dissipated, irregular and worthless deportment, through the remainder of life. The inconsideration of our early years too often appears through the successive stages of our journey ; and, guided by no direct path, makes us blindfold rush on precipices that prove our ruin. Were you then, my young friends ! to stop just at your entrance on the stage of the world, and to view with a steady eye the scenes that lie before you ; and, amidst the various paths that will present themselves to your view, deliberately to enter upon that of religion ; deliberately to embrace the truth, as it is in Jesus ; to search the scriptures from your youth,” and to pay a fixed and solemn regard to the interesting truths they reveal,

reveal, much trouble would be averted from falling on your own heads; from much anxiety and heart-felt vexation would your parents, friends and relations be freed; and much real good would be performed to society. Think then in what manner you design to acquit yourselves in the great duties of life—in the devotion you owe to God; in the justice you owe to men. Weak and feeble are your own powers; strong and impetuous are your passions; corrupt and treacherous are your hearts: in the commencement of life, as well as in the conclusion “your sufficiency must, therefore, be of God.”

Depending then on the fulfilment of this promise—“My grace shall be made sufficient for you; my strength shall be made perfect in your weakness”—are you resolved to act in conformity to the will of your Creator? Is it to be your first and principal care, to observe with fidelity the precepts of that religion which he has revealed? Are you determined, whatever others do, to cultivate the shining graces of the Christian life,—“to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent, and whom to know is life eternal;” or are you to fill up the whole of your time by the idle cares, and still idler pleasures of the world? Now is the opportunity of laying the foundation of all that is fair and beautiful in conduct. “Consider your ways” deliberately at this season, and fix on an unalterable plan of filling your station in the world with usefulness and propriety; and, depending on the promised aid of heaven, proceed, in a progressive manner, to the highest degrees of proficiency, in the science of living well. The Scriptures assure you, in solemn language, “that as you sow, you must reap;” that the fruits of your industry are not to terminate with the grave. Youth, in whatever way you spend it, has an effect on manhood: Manhood, in whatever way you mean to spend it, has an equal influence on old age; and the whole of life put together, has an inseparable connection with

your eternal duration ! If you then waste the more early and precious moments of life, without acting a deliberate and religious part, besides wringing out the dregs of so inconsiderate a course in misery and contempt among men, more awful consequences (unless the arm of God interfere) await you in a future and unchangeable state. There, those eyes, that should have contemplated the beauties of the heavenly Jerusalem, shall behold nothing but the regions of fell despair ! those tongues, that should have uttered accents of heavenly devotion, shall then,—dreadful thought ! be employed in blaspheming the God of heaven and of earth ! those hands, that should have attuned a celestial harp, shall then become instruments fit only for expressing your inward horror and agony of mind ! those hearts, that should have been temples of the Holy Ghost, the seats of purity and love, shall then become the habitation of endless wretchedness, and of the worm that dieth not !

In order to avoid these alarming consequences, will you not confess that Consideration is absolutely necessary ? While the prime of life, while the care of affectionate parents are in your power, while the means of grace, and the hopes of glory, are placed before your eyes, it is your duty not to neglect them, but to improve them to the best and noblest purposes—the salvation of your immortal souls ! Let the fate of thousands who have ruined themselves, who have made shipwreck of principle, of honour and of character, teach you wisdom.—Consider the world on which you are just entering as an extensive ocean ; on it you will see wrecks, thick and frequent ; let these forwarn you of the concealed and fatal rocks, on which, if you rush, you shall likewise infallibly perish.—Valuable is the season of life you now enjoy ! What would not he, who is marked with gray hairs in iniquity, give for your moments ? What would not the untimely criminal, or ghastly sinner proffer for your

your innocent hours? How much, do you think, would those, who are now doomed to everlasting punishment, give to be once more put in possession of your opportunity?—Events big with future misery, or future happiness, spring from the principles you are now imbibing; from the habits you are now forming. You are at last to stand at the bar of God and to be judged “according to deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or bad.” These, if the result of forwardness and rashness, will diffuse misery and ruin over the remainder of your days; if the result of wisdom and discretion they will give to life a high and exquisite relish. It becomes not you, therefore to defer the needful work of Consideration to the middle, or concluding stages of life, lest conscious guilt and merited reproach meet you in every thought.—Since so much depends on the first and continued steps you take in life, who then would not offer up the sincerest prayers for your safety and happiness?—May the spirit of God conduct you through the slippery paths of youth; and, unseen, lead you in the paths of righteousness; and at last render you respectable in the sight of heaven and of earth!

Think not, however, after this season of life is gone that you shall have no occasion “to consider your ways.” The farther you advance in life; the more you engage in the business of the world; the more you mingle in the society of men; the more necessary it will become to look around you with care, and examine your conduct. You are safe within the walls of the nursery; you are safe under the eye of a parent: But you have reason to tremble when you quit the one; when you are at a distance from the other.—It may have been your happiness to have been favoured with lessons of the soundest wisdom from the lips of affectionate parents; perhaps you have often heard them send up fervent prayers for your future prosperity, and you may have left

lest your father's house, and native home deeply impressed with a serious sense of religion; and for these reasons you may be apt to imagine, you have no need of Consideration. Be not, however, too confident. You may now stand on a sure and stable foundation; but both reason and religion command you to consider your ways; to take heed lest you fall, not only in the outset, but in the more advanced stages of your journey through life. Perhaps you have fortunately escaped the pleasing snares of vice; you have, not fallen in the slippery and dangerous paths of youth; and religion, for the present, has full possession of your heart: for this very reason, like a ship richly laden, you must be guarded with double care.

1. It becomes you, therefore, to be watchful and attentive when you have the prospect of changing your situation of life. If heaven should crown your industry with prosperity, it becomes you then, in a particular manner, "to consider your ways." When placed in a successful and prosperous condition, there is no small danger of your former sentiments undergoing a striking and visible change! External circumstances, and more frequent intercourse with the world, but too much mould and form us. Hence we are often cautioned and put on our guard, by the inspired authors, against the world. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this," says James, "to keep one's self unspotted from the world." The same apostle assures us that "the fellowship of the world is enmity with God." We are also told in solemn language, "That the world lieth in wickedness." Hence the apostle John exhorts us, "Love not the world." Our Lord himself commands us to watch and pray against its power and influence. A state of prosperity is the most trying and dangerous one, in which we can be placed. You are particularly called upon, when placed in such a condition, to consider your ways." For he, that could have resisted the solicitations to vice,

vice, in the vale of obscurity and retirement, will find it a more difficult task, when moving in a more public, affluent, and exalted sphere. The virtue that might have flourished in the shade, may wither if Consideration is wanting, a temporary decay in the sunshine of prosperity and success. Ought you not then, amidst the changing scenes of the world, to consider your ways; and to study to retain your integrity, to preserve your religious sentiments, and to show how little influence the concerns of time, or the pleasures of sense have in the regulation of your conduct? Ought you not to watch over your behaviour at this critical and trying season with a jealous eye, lest the business and amusement of life should either alter, or corrupt your heart?—But prosperity is not the only danger that threatens you.

2. It becomes you to consider your ways—to pay serious attention to your conduct in the connections you mean to form in the world. “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” Perhaps you are as yet but little connected with the world. You have still the hazard (and a real hazard it is) to run of forming such connections in society as may embitter the remainder of your days, and dry up the springs of future happiness. Hitherto you have walked with the wise; ere long it may be your misfortune to have but too frequent intercourse with the less virtuous part of mankind; and, mindless of your former character, you may assume that of your new companions; imbibe their sentiments; act upon their plan, and form to theirs the relish of your soul. How necessary then, my young friends! is consideration—the maturest consideration here? In the early parts of life, with much pains and industry have you acquired a treasure of wisdom and of happiness, and will you squander it away by mere inadvertence “by being thus conformed to the world?” Will you renounce the advantages of your education? Will you so soon forget the sense and presence of
you

your Creator, so early instilled into your tender minds? Will you so soon deny the name and renounce the profession of a Christian? Will you so soon forget the love and favours of the Redeemer of men, and sacrifice the perpetual pleasures, which his religion promises, for the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season? Is that sun, which rose with such splendour thus to set in such untimely darkness? Is that flower, which showed such early and vernal beauty, thus to suffer decay for want of continued cultivation? Will you" (to use the language of scripture, than which nothing can be stronger, or more expressive of your situation) "sow wheat and thus reap thorns? Will you earn wages and put it in a bag full of holes?" Let Consideration,—let reflection then preside and attend your progress through life. "You cannot," said an ancient philosopher, "ever feel any uneasiness from not prying into the lives and actions of other men; but you shall and must feel the greatest misery from not prying into your own life and actions."—Let sedateness then be your guide.—Let a strict and impartial scrutiny ever be employed in all the stages of your journey. You shall then have reason to look back to the beginning of your days with the highest satisfaction. Your life shall rise up in order before you, like a beautiful and well cultivated landscape, every portion of which appearing pleasant and delightful to the eye. But these admonitions you may despise; these motives to induce you to consider your ways, may have but little weight. Mindless of every human and sacred obligation, you may delight "to walk in the counsel of the ungodly; to stand in the way of sinners; and to sit in the seat of the scornful." It remains, therefore, that I show, in the *Third* place, the necessity and advantage of *consideration* to such as are of a vicious and abandoned character.

To no person is consideration more necessary than to him who is in the path of the destroyer; who

is dead in trespasses and sin. He is in a dangerous and ruinous path. The ultimate end and design of his creation he has forgotten. The heavens, and the inanimate works of nature, still continue to shew forth the glory of their Maker; but not one thought, not one word, not one action of his life ever tended to glorify that God who gave him existence. To him he has never paid supreme veneration. Devout and grateful adoration has never softened and warmed his heart. A strong sense of his necessary dependence upon God; humility and fervency in his worship; willing obedience to his laws; and an acquiescence in all the determinations of his providence, are subjects by no means familiar to his mind. Conscience, and all the generous principles of his nature, have gradually yielded to the usurpation of the inferior passions. While he thus has disregarded his God; while he thus has ruined his own happiness, it would be vain to expect he should view the interests of his fellow men with a friendly and benevolent eye. And accordingly we find him, instead of having cultivated a lively sense of integrity, humanity, and compassion, violating, with a daring arm, all the ties of justice and benevolence. To injure and distress has ever been the tenor of his life. Can there be a more detestable character than this? And to what is it owing? Is it not to want of consideration on the final destination of man, and the ruinous effects of vice?—And if there be one in this assembly, whose conscience tells him, “Thou art the man,” let me ask him, do you not think *immediate* consideration necessary? You are standing on a precipice, every moment ready to drop into destruction. Can you make too much haste to flee from so great and apparent danger? Medicine to a virulent and dangerous disease is not more necessary than consideration is for you. Let conscience resume her throne but for one moment, and put this interesting question to you: if you persevere, what consequences do you expect to follow your conduct?

Look

Look around you in the world; see thousands reaping the unpalatable fruits of their rashness and folly; see them pining away in poverty, meanness, and contempt; see them feeling, exquisitely feeling, all the ruinous effects of their irregularities and crimes, by a ceaseless anxiety of mind. Every thought within tends to disturb their repose; every object without to harass their minds. But you need not go so far to be convinced of this truth. Consult your own feelings; ask your own heart what guilty horrors have already interrupted your repose?—Say, with candour, say, when sobriety of mind has returned for a season, what piercing agonies have already embittered your days! How oft has that sun beheld your mind, at such intervals of reflection, tortured with anguish and dismay! And if you intend to go through the several stages of iniquity, to wander still farther in the mazes of sin, do you expect less severe and excruciating agony of mind.

Be not deceived. Behind, will not unrepented guilt fill you with dismay; Before, will not an awful eternity and an offended God strike you with terror, and shake your guilty frame? Stop then, and *Consider* your ways. For this purpose were reason and understanding implanted within you: For this purpose the Almighty addresses you from his throne. Will you then extinguish the candle of the Lord, that is thus lighted up within you, by not following its direction? Will you turn a deaf ear to the voice which spoke you into existence? What is this, but to be without understanding, and like the beasts that perish! If you do not stop, you may, ere long, become hardened in iniquity: Your conscience become seared as with a hot iron. A visible display of the righteous judgements of Heaven, against the, works of darkness, the contempt of all good men, may cease to make an impression on your mind. This is the common case: Alas! it is but too common!

Be not deceived. Although this deadness in trespasses and sin, may take place for a considerable length of time; yet you have to fear, if you go on from vanity to vice, with a progressive pace, there will arrive a black and dreadful day, when some misfortunate event in life, when some afflicting dispensation of Divine Providence, like a small spark shall kindle a fire within you, and make all your crimes, with their peculiar aggravations, pass in full review, before your eyes. The hurry of business, the pleasures of sense, and the deceitfulness of sin may now lull you asleep; but your awakening shall then be awful. Seldom is impenitence allowed to go off this mortal stage, without tasting the bitter fruits of its folly and impiety. Then the stings of a guilty mind, joined to the adverse circumstances of life, shall render you a complete picture of human wretchedness. Conscience, had its voice been listened to, before you made such progress in iniquity, would have soothed you in this trying hour of distress; but when desolation cometh as a whirlwind, it shall then increase the fury of the storm, by thundering in your ears the bitterest reproaches, and extort from your breast the following language of despondency and despair — “I have now reached the summit of wickedness,—the heights of human madness. The close of life is fast approaching, and it *forces* me to look back on the beginning of my days, to take a retrospect view of life; which, alas! resembles to much a bleak, barren, and uncultivated desert! The pious education, which I received from the lips of indulgent parents, soon lost its influence in the world. I had not been long in the society of men till I became the companion of fools; and, mindless of God, or of man, followed my own criminal devices. I have sinned against the clearest knowledge of my duty; against the frequent checks and convictions of conscience; against the admonitions and reproofs of my best and worthiest friends.”

“In the hours of mirth and vanity, I have braved
 “even the terrors of the Lord, and the wrath of God
 “revealed from heaven. I have lightly esteemed the
 “awful sufferings of my Saviour for sin, and neglected
 “the salvation of God: In consequence of which, I
 “now feel the reproaches of youth, joined to the
 “vanity and insignificance of old age. Oh! the despair
 “that lodges within this breast. Like a dead and
 “insupportable burden, it presses down my very soul!
 “How can I bear the compunction of mind I feel
 “for the many valuable hours I have lost. My days,
 “instead of having been spent in the service of my
 “God, have been spent “in the ways of sinners.”—
 “I now stand on the brink of an awful eternity!—
 “A solemn appearance before my judge is not far
 “distant, and I find myself in possession of nothing to
 “support me then, but the bitter remembrance of
 “guilt.—Now my sins harrow up my soul!—
 “What! what must I feel, when they rise up in
 “judgement against me, in presence of the insulted
 “Majesty of heaven and earth; when an irreversible
 “sentence from the throne of God shall fix my doom
 “to eternal ages, and consign me over to everlasting
 “fire prepared for the devil and his angels!—O that
 “I were annihilated! O that I could drop into no-
 “thing!—I seem as if all hell was within me, and I in
 “hell!”

Such is the language you will employ, when you
 have finished your mad and thoughtless career of
 wickedness; when you have filled up the measure
 of your wrath. Let me now ask you, after a view of
 such consequences, resulting from want of Consider-
 ation (and they are certain consequences) What are
 your present resolutions? Do you still put no value
 on Consideration? Or, I will suppose the best, do
 you wish to leave your sins? To depart from the
 snares of death? Is your conscience awakened? Are
 you weary and heavy-laden with the burden of your
 sins? Is the desire implanted in your breast to come

unto Jesus that you may have life? Have you got a surfeit of iniquity? Is vice now stripped of that thin disguise, and those false ornaments, in which your passions and prejudices and mad companions formerly dressed it? Are you now anxious to apply to the Saviour of mankind for pardon, to use those means, which he has put into your power, for the restoration of your nature, and the recovery of your felicity?— If these be your determinations, think not that you are such an outcast of heaven. If you see the folly of your conduct, if you are sensible of your danger, and, through the grace of God, are henceforth to walk “in the law of the Lord,” your Saviour, this moment, from his throne of mercy, gives you the completest pardon. For such as you, immortal thanks to Heaven! his cross was erected on Mount Calvary: For such as you the blood streamed from his side; it was designed to wash away the guilt and pollution of the world. What stronger arguments can I adduce to make you turn from your sins unto the Lord, “who will have mercy upon you, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon you.” And may the Spirit of God create you again in Christ Jesus unto good works, and enable you to walk in newness of life!

Thus have I shewn the necessity and advantages of Consideration to different characters and certain seasons of life, from the circumstances peculiar to each of them. In whatever class, or division we stand, let us “consider our ways.” We are all men, and acting for eternity, let us then not trifle with time, and squander it away by treasuring up to ourselves wrath against the day of wrath: If we are young, let us, in a special manner, take care to remember our Creator in the days of our youth. Let us enter on the world with a vigilant and jealous eye. Let us guard against the different methods of seduction that will be employed to corrupt our morals, and destroy our principles. Trust not presumptuously to your own understandings.

understandings. Ever look up to heaven for superior aid and direction. Be often on bended knees, pouring out the desires of your hearts before God, who has promised, "They that seek me early shall find me." Destitute of his assistance, you are like so many helpless orphans, left to wander in a pathless desert, without one friendly hand to conduct you, without one powerful arm to protect you from those thick and constant storms, that will soon gather around your heads. You must lift up your eyes unto the hills "from whence cometh your help. Your help must come from the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Take care, when you have reached the middle and busiest part of life, lest the changes, that may then take place, should alter your sentiments. Be cautious; be considerate in your intercourse with the world, that your heart may not reproach you so long as you live. I shall conclude this discourse by laying before you the dying advice of the king of Israel to his young son. "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."——1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

SERMON XVI.

ROMANS vii. 24.

● wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

THE goodness and mercy of God appear, in a wonderful manner, in giving Christ to be the Saviour of lost sinners. When we think of his original and personal glory; when we think of his incarnation, his humiliation, and sufferings; his death and resurrection; and the rich and eternal blessings which are bestowed on his people in consequence of his obedience unto death; we cannot but adopt the language of an apostle, and say, "that the work of redemption hath a height, a depth, a breadth, and a length, that passeth all understanding." The more it is contemplated, the more are we lost in wonder, love and praise. But though the privileges, the promises, the hopes and blessings of his mediation are many and unspeakably great, yet it seemeth good unto God not to put us in possession of these all at once. He communicates them to us in a gradual and progressive manner. He studies our growth in grace, as well as the advancement of his own glory. It is for this reason he does not exempt his children altogether

from the attacks of their spiritual enemies, or from the complaints which the strength and power of remaining corruption may occasion in the serious mind. While in the world, we are called to carry on a spiritual warfare with our own hearts, and continually to fight against principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. There is no exemption from this warfare to the disciple of Christ; no cessation of arms while on this side of eternity. Of all the enemies we are called to oppose, there are none so ready to prevail against us, or to overcome us; none so secret and hidden as indwelling sin; as the evil bias and corruption of our own hearts. This body of death is with us in every place. It attends us by night and by day, and mingles too much of its baneful influence in every duty we perform. In all ages of the church the people of God have complained, and heavily groaned under the power of this spiritual and bosom foe. Paul, in our text, finds the remainder of his corrupt nature—the unregenerate part warring against the law of his mind, and exercising, in no small degree, a kind of tyranny over him. Hence the earnest and fervent prayer which he utters in the words of the text: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” In no place of his writings do we hear him complaining of the troubles and afflictions, to which he was exposed. A large portion of these he sustained with proper fortitude, as we learn from his own account, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 23. “Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.” He bore these and many other severities with patience and resignation to the divine will. He complained not, even of death itself, when it approached him; but he feels uneasy, he complains bitterly of the law of sin and death that was within him. In another part of his epistles he tells us, that he had learned

learned in whatever state he was, therewith to be content. One state is here you see excepted—the state of corruption and of death. He represents sin as having a *body*. As a body consists of many members, and is always supposed to possess a considerable degree of strength; it is a fit emblem of sin in the heart, which is strong and powerful, and consists of many parts. He represents it also as a *body of death*. It is to the renewed mind as uneasy, and disagreeable, as natural death is to the carnal man. Perhaps the allusion is borrowed from that mode of punishment invented by tyrants in ancient times, when they ordered a dead body to be fastened to a living person, and allowed it in this manner to consume away in a state of putrefaction. We may easily conceive how offensive this would be to the living person, and how earnestly he would wish to be delivered from it. Equally uneasy and offensive is the power of sin in the heart to the child of God. Every one, who has the divine principle of life implanted in his soul, will desire as earnestly to be delivered from the body of this spiritual death.

In discoursing on these words, I shall, in the first place, show how the children of God discover this holy anxiety, and concern, to be delivered from the body of sin and death.

II. I shall mention, or assign some reasons why they lament and wish to be delivered from indwelling corruption.

III. I shall shew how this corruption discovers itself in the temper and conduct of God's children.

IV. Mention some final causes, or reasons, why it may seem good to an infinitely wise God to allow his children, in any degree, to groan for a season under the burden of indwelling sin. And then I shall apply the subject.

I. I am to show how the children of God discover the holy anxiety, and concern, expressed in the text.

1. The people of God discover a serious concern about the strength and power of sin in their hearts, by an ingenuous confession of its guilt; by having an humbling sight and sense of its evil nature. If we be insensible of the nature, danger, and deformity of sin, we can never be under much serious concern on account of it. It is an affecting sight, a deep sense of the evil of sin that will ever give rise to this holy anxiety of mind; and wherever this exists, it will lead to an open and ingenuous confession of sin to God. "I will declare my iniquity," said David, "I will be sorry for my sin; and mine iniquity I have not hid. I said I will confess my transgression." Here he multiplies expression upon expression, varying his language to show us how freely and fully he acted in the presence of God. Convinced of the danger, of the guilt and pollution of sin, he makes no reserve in his confession—"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." You, who have already experienced this serious concern of mind on account of sin, will know that this is the leading and principal ingredient in all godly sorrow; in that repentance that needeth not to be repented of. And if any of you shall ever be brought, from convictions wrought in your soul by the Spirit of God, to declare your iniquity, to confess your repeated transgressions in his presence, with all their aggravated circumstances, you will do it in an open, a full, and unreserved manner. If ever you receive from God penitential and believing hearts, then you will know something of the serious anxiety expressed by our apostle in the words of the text. Alas! when we look around us on any congregation, how many, instead of being sensible of the heinous nature of sin, as dishonouring to God, who hates it necessarily and with a perfect hatred, glory in that which is their shame, and cease not to declare their sin like Sodom. No humble confession drops from their lips; no contrition is felt in their hearts; they call sin as a sweet morsel under their tongues; but, alas!

alas ! it will prove in the end, gall and wormwood ; deadly poison to their souls. Such persons are absolute strangers to those feelings that actuated the mind of our apostle. They are still the captives of Satan, and bound with the chains of their own iniquity. How widely are they distant from the language and confession of the Publican : " God be merciful to me a sinner !" How little do they know of the penitential spirit that appeared so graceful in the Prodigal Son, when, on bended knees, he said to his father : " Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."

2. The children of God discover this holy anxiety on account of sin, by mourning over it in secret. They consider the remainder of corruption in their hearts as the source of all sin ; and for that reason they feel inexpressible trouble and sorrow. Were the fountain of the heart pure and uncorrupted, the streams that flow from it would appear in the course of our lives untainted. But, alas ! out of the heart proceed every evil thought, and every evil action. Can the serious Christian then remain unaffected with this consideration ? The more he thinks of the baneful influence of inward corruption, the more ground he sees for mourning and lamentation. There are many things in sin sufficient, if seriously viewed, to fill us with trouble and grief of heart. The smallest sin is committed in contempt of the holiness of God. It is that abominable thing, which is loathsome in his sight. It is committed against the law of God, against the providence, the word, the mercy of God. Should the Lord mark iniquity against us, he might make us a terror to ourselves and to all around us. The more we are convinced of this, the more will we be troubled and grieved for the sins we have done. This trouble of mind, this penitential grief of soul, will vent itself in heavy, mournful complaints against sin. We will look upon him whom we have pierced, and mourn

and be in bitterness for sin, as one mourneth for an only child. Serious thoughts of their corruption will fetch many sighs from the breast, and many tears from the eyes of the godly. They will be frequently heard and seen by an invisible Redeemer "abhorring themselves in dust and in ashes."

3. The children of God discover a holy concern for sin in their hearts, by using all proper and appointed means to be delivered from this bosom enemy. Is prayer a proper mean? How fervent are they in seeking the face and favour of God. They frequently bow the knee to God, beseeching him to conquer and subdue every sinful emotion that may rise in their breasts. They are ever crying to God to pardon their unworthiness; to help their infirmities. The language of the gracious soul is, 'Lord, pity my case, helpless and forlorn, without thy aid; assist me against this bosom foe; subdue its reigning power; restrain and check its headstrong impetuosity. Alas! it is ever but too ready to prevail and turn me aside from thee, my God. O give me the assistance of thy Spirit to enable me to withstand the motions, the bias, and propensities of sin. In every duty, alas, how much does it disturb me! how much does it make my heart wander! how much does it cool and damp the holy aspirations of my mind!' In this manner will the serious soul use prayer as a promised and happy mean to destroy the love and power of sin in the heart. Is reading the word a proper and appointed mean? he, who feels the anxiety expressed in the text, will have daily recourse to the law and testimony of his God. He will search the scriptures diligently, because they testify of Christ, and in them he has his charter for eternal life. "He will make them a light to his feet and a lamp to his path" Are the ordinances of religion proper and appointed means to destroy the love and power of sin in the heart? A sick person does not more anxiously wish for a physician; an hungry person for bread; a

thirsty person for water; than the child of God wish to enjoy the ordinances of religion; to dwell in the tabernacles of his grace. "I was glad when the Lord said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. "Our feet shall stand within thy gates. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness.—How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth for thee, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Is meditation a proper mean of delivering him from the body of this death? the Christian will, therefore, have his hours of retirement as well as of business. Whether in the fields, or in the closet, he will take care to shut out the world, and converse only with his God. Now he will think on the riches of free and sovereign grace; now he will dwell on his own guilt and unworthiness. The events of providence and the interpositions of grace will pass through his mind and leave deep impressions of admiration, of gratitude and love. The glories of the unseen world will raise his affections above every sublunary enjoyment. In this manner do the children of God use every mean to weaken the power of sin in their hearts.

4. They also discover the serious concern expressed in the text, by looking and longing for heaven where they shall be finally delivered from every degree of sin. It is characteristic of regenerate souls, often to cast a fond and longing look to those new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The more the Christian grows in grace and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus, the more sick he grows of the world; the more dead and deaf is he to its treacherous music; the more cool and indifferent does he become to the objects of time and sense. A captive does not desire more earnestly to be delivered out of the hand of his enemy, and to enjoy perfect liberty, than the godly wish to be put in possession of the perfect liberty of the

sons of God. They often think upon and anticipate, with inexpressible satisfaction, those moments that shall set them free from every struggle with this bottom foe; when they shall rest from their labours in that place where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary find eternal repose. How warmly did our apostle express himself, when he wished "to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." A total freedom from sin will ever give heaven a preference, in the estimation of the Christian, to all the enjoyments which this world can afford. Every one, therefore, who knows what it is to struggle with the emotions of sin in the heart, will long, in the moments of serious reflection, to be placed beyond the reach of this foe, which hath harassed him so much in this state of pilgrimage. I shall now,

In the Second place, assign some reasons why the children of God are so affected with a sense of sin in their hearts.

1. The children of God express themselves in the plaintive language of the text; because indwelling corruption is defiling and polluting to the soul. It is nothing but sin that makes us unlike to the pure and perfect nature of God. It is this that renders us unfit for his work and service. Is it to be wondered at, then, if the Christian should anxiously wish to be delivered from it? Would you be surprised to see a man in rags wishing to be clothed with decent apparel? Would you be surprised to see a person, grievously wounded or attacked with a dangerous distemper, applying to a physician to be cured; or, would you wonder to see a person, who had been confined for a long time to a place of filth and corruption, wishing to be delivered out of it, and placed in a situation more healthy and clean? Cease then to wonder, if the renewed Christian, sensible of the polluting and defiling nature of sin in the heart, should wish to lay aside his filthy rags of self-righteousness, and be clothed

clothed with the garments of salvation; if he should wish to have his wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores healed by the physician of souls; if he should wish to be delivered from the filth and corruption of sin, and restored to the beauty and image of holiness. David had this view of the baneful influence of sin in his heart, when he uttered the following prayer: "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than the snow."

2. The children of God wish to be delivered from all sin in the heart, because of the danger with which it is attended. The more dangerous any disease is, the more afflicted is the patient when he knows it; the more anxiously does he wish to be delivered from its power. In like manner, how natural is it for the godly, when they find corruption stirring within them, to bemoan and lament their state, and to feel an anxiety to be delivered from it, proportioned to the danger they apprehend. The awakened sinner is convinced that sin exposes him to the vengeance of God both in this life and that which is to come. The more he thinks of the ruinous consequences of sin, the more alarmed he is, and the more earnest in his supplications to be delivered from them. He intreats, he pleads that his sins may be forgiven, and blotted out of the book of God's remembrance. The more he is convinced of his guilty state by nature, the more earnestly will he "flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him." It was this apprehension of danger that made David express himself in the following manner: "Lord! be merciful to me; be merciful to my soul, for I have sinned." He knew that sin was such a dangerous evil, that he could not stand before the strict search of divine justice; and therefore he prays God to be merciful to him. He knew sin to be so deadly a disease, as to baffle all the skill and wisdom of man to cure, and therefore he prays that God would heal him.

3. The children of God wish to be delivered from

sin in the heart ; because when it prevails, it hinders them from doing the good which their renewed part inclines them to perform. They find sin to be the chief obstruction that hinders the Saviour from seeing of the travel of his soul and being satisfied ; they find it the chief hindrance to the lively exercise of every spiritual grace ; they find it to be the chief impediment to their progress in holiness and the regular discharge of commanded duty. If they love God too little ; if their thoughts are too seldom placed on the Saviour ; it is owing to the remainder of corruption in their hearts : If they have too little of his fear before their eyes ; if they feel but little delight in holy duty ; if they are too remiss in maintaining good works, and loving their neighbour as themselves ; if they are too seldom employed in being eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and making the widow's heart sing for joy ; if they are too seldom employed in holy and devout meditations, in prayer and praise to God ; these things are owing to the love and power of sin in their hearts. This becomes, therefore, a powerful reason with them to adopt the language of the text : " O wretched man that I am ! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? " Thus Paul complains in this epistle. " The good that I would, I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do. " When indwelling corruption hinders the people of God from doing acceptable service to him, it greatly afflicts them. It draws many tears from their eyes, and fetches many a sigh from their breasts.

4. The children of God are affected with a serious concern on account of inward corruption ; because it mars and interrupts their sweet and delightful communion with God. " Thou hidest thy face," said David, " and I was troubled. " Now, God is never more ready to hide his face than when corruption prevails in the heart of his people. Nothing will sooner mar the communion of the soul with God than

than this. Inward corruption deadens the heart, and makes it careless and indifferent about the pleasures of religion. In those beclouded moments, have you never heard the godly complain of having lost that sweet frame and liberty of spirit in their approaches to God, which formerly made them happy? Have you not heard them expressing their fears, "that he had forgotten to be gracious; and that his tender mercies were clean gone." The moment they are sensible of the loss of God's presence, and of the light of his countenance, they bemoan their condition, and wish to be delivered from it. No sooner do serious souls find that they have not that free and enlarged intercourse with God they once enjoyed; that they have not those sweet breathings of Spirit they once experienced; than they weep, and lament, and cry out, "O wretched men that we are! Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?—O that it were with me," saith the serious soul, "as in months past. I cannot find him in secret, I cannot find him in my family, or in his house of prayer. I have not that happy frame and disposition I formerly enjoyed, when corruption was low and kept under. I have not those sweet and refreshing views of my Redeemer I once enjoyed. I now know the meaning of those expressive words, put into the mouth of Jeremiah when he spoke to a corrupt and sinful people: Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you." Chap. v. 25.

5. The children of God are affected with a serious concern of mind on account of indwelling corruption; because it resists and opposes the graces of the Spirit. "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." It is the Christian's daily wish, and most earnest prayer that these graces and fruits may increase in strength, vigour, and beauty. If any of them should grow languid, how uneasy does he

feel

feel! Every thing that tends to make them expand, and to call them forth into exercise, affords him secret pleasure and satisfaction. Every thing, on the other hand, that checks their growth or tarnishes their beauty, gives him much vexation of soul. The power and love of sin in the heart often effects this, and, for that reason, the Christian wishes to be delivered from it. When you enter a pleasant garden, and see every thing blooming and smiling around you, how agreeably are you delighted? But when you think of the killing frosts and the blasting storms that will lay all the pride and beauty of the finest flowers in the dust; when you think of any thing that will retard their progress and disappoint your pleasing expectations; how uneasy do you feel? Do you not wish that the killing mildew may not blast; that the tempest may not approach; that the scorching heat may not burn up the blooming hopes of the season? Much more anxiously does the serious mind wish that the deceitfulness of sin may not check the breathings of his love; may not damp his spiritual joy; may not disturb his inward peace; may not destroy his spirit of long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Such are the reasons why the children of God are afflicted with indwelling corruption; and why they wish to be delivered from it. I proceed to shew,

In the third place, how inward corruption discovers itself in the hearts of the children of God. This will be an easy matter. It is only, Christians, to call your attention to the secret workings of your own hearts.

1. When sin prevails, it always disposes us to be slothful in duty. When corruption is strong, there will be a great backwardness to duty, and a criminal indolence will appear in the performance of it. When it is kept under by the power of divine grace, what a holy zeal and fervency of spirit do we feel in the service of the living God? Whereas, when it prevails,

vails, what wanderings and instability of heart; what deadness and dulness in devotion; what carelessness and lukewarmness for the cause and honour of Christ! We then seek our own things, and not the things of Christ. Though grace may be in the heart, it lies dormant, it is but feebly exercised. Our faith becomes weak and languid; hope abates of its former liveliness, and love of its warmth and fervency. It is then the duties of the family and closet can be neglected, without compunction of mind. It is then the ordinances of religion and the means of grace are attended without feeling or devotion. It is then we can find out the most artful and soul-deceiving apologies for the neglect of the most sacred duties.

2. When sin prevails in the heart, it gives us unfavourable views of divine providence. When the people of God meet with cross providences; if they fret and murmur, if they repine against the wise determinations of God; they may rest assured that inward dwelling corruptions are prevailing in their hearts for the grace of God, and the principles of the divine life, always lead to a holy and humble submission to the will of God; whereas, sin in the heart disposes us to fret and murmur against heaven. Thus Asaph when he was afflicted, and saw the wicked prospering, he murmured, under the power and influence of inward corruption, against God. "Verily, I have cleansed my hands in vain, and washed my hands in innocence," Psalm lxxiii. 13. Do you then O serious Christian! wish to know when inward corruption is most prevalent? It prevails in exact proportion to your fretfulness under the dispensation of divine providence; and it is weakened in exact proportion to your humble resignation to the divine will. Discontentment with our state and condition in life; ungracious and distrustful impressions of divine providence; presumption to impeach the divine wisdom; are the unhallowed brood of indwelling sin: whereas, an acquiescence in the wise disposal

our Redeemer; a secret approbation of his providential determinations, how dark and clouded soever they may appear to the carnal eye; how cross and opposite they may be to the wishes and hopes of flesh and blood; these are promising evidences that we have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; these are the happy offspring of grace in our hearts.

3. When sin prevails in the heart, it disposes us to set our affections too much on things on earth; to seek our happiness from the creature, rather than from the Creator; from the streams rather than the fountain of life. When the people of God are diverted from the regular performance of religious duties; when they are led to consider the things of time and sense as worthy of their supreme affections, and pursuits; when they immoderately follow the pleasures of a present world, conforming to the customs and corruptions of the age in which they live, and neglecting the interests of religion and of the kingdom of Christ; they may pass sentence on their own hearts, that they are deceitful above all things, and that sin is erecting its standard too high in their souls. For, we may lay it down as an undoubted maxim, that an immoderate thirst and pursuit after the things of this world always makes us grow indifferent about the concerns of another: it is sure to choke the word and ordinances. Becoming unfruitful, surfeited and overcharged with this world, we fall into a drowsy and sleepy frame.

4 When sin prevails in the heart, it disposes us to neglect the means of grace and the ordinances of religion. This is a melancholy mark of a backsliding, careless, and secure spirit. When we can be at some pains to find out or feign excuses to encourage our hearts in the neglect of stated and sacred duties; when we become lukewarm about our spiritual concerns, and shun *the green pastures and still waters*, that have formerly refreshed us; when we grow cold about religious discourse, and indifferent to our pious companions,

companions, we have much reason to fear the growth and strength of corruption in our hearts. How many set out with a fair and promising appearance in the work and service of God; warm and fervent affections give life and energy to their devotion; they are zealous beyond many others in supporting the cause of Christ in the world; and they stand amazed at the deadness, coldness, and infatuation of thousands around them; they are even sometimes heard to express their sentiments with too great acrimony of spirit; but, alas! they are these who have no depth of earth to receive the seed of eternal life. When this heat is over, when their *animal* devotion subsides, (and it deserves no other name) you have but to open your eyes to witness direful proofs of a dead and declining spirit, of a lifeless devotion; to see corruption grow apace, and a careless and negligent spirit indulged.

5. When sin prevails in the heart, it discovers itself by disposing us to be unwatchful against temptation. When we can allow ourselves to rush, in an unguarded manner, into the midst of evil; or when we seek and industriously court the charms and snares of the tempter, have we not reason to conclude, that we are giving too much indulgence to sin in our hearts? The world in which we live is an ensnaring and deceitful world. There is not a step we take; not an object we behold; not a pleasure we enjoy; but, sometime or other, proves a temptation to withdraw our hearts from the path of duty. The Christian is aware of this, and enters on the world with much suspicion. He considers himself as entering on an enemy's ground, where perhaps every step he takes an ambuscade is laid; where he is in danger from unknown and unsuspected quarters. A general should not watch the motions of an enemy with more vigilance and attention than the Christian should watch and guard against the temptations of the world. If we then can begin the business of the day without

without fortifying ourselves against the snares of
 life; without committing our way to God; if we
 allow the temptations of life to deaden our feelings
 to divine things; to withdraw our attention from
 our eternal concerns; and to render our hearts callous
 and insensible to devout and heavenly objects; what
 are we doing? Are we not strengthening the strong-
 holds of sin and Satan in our souls; giving firmer
 foundations in our hearts to the kingdom of darkness?
 Thus David and Peter are melancholy instances of
 unguarded conduct in the hour of temptation.
 The one was led to oaths and treachery; the other
 to the commission of murder and adultery. Had
 they been more guarded in the hour of danger; had
 they shunned more carefully the enemy's ground;
 corruption would have been restrained, and their in-
 nocence would have been preserved. Many a bitter
 reflection might they have saved themselves; many
 tears would have been prevented from falling from
 their eyes. Corruption rose in the heart as they re-
 laxed their vigilance, and they fell for a time victims
 to the love and power of sin. I shall now,

In the fourth place, mention some final causes, or
 reasons, why it seems good to an infinitely wise God,
 to suffer indwelling sin to remain in his people. God,
 we may believe has wise reasons for the permission of
 every thing in his kingdom of providence, or grace;
 some of these he plainly has revealed; but there are
 many others which, we may suppose, baffle our keenest
 search. We shall take notice of a few of the most
 obvious reasons connected with our present subject.
 1. God may suffer indwelling corruption to remain
 in his people, in order to excite them to a more diligent
 improvement of those principles and graces he has
 implanted in their hearts. The graces of the Spirit,
 like the Spirit himself, are living and active principles
 in the soul. In whatever heart they reside, they give
 rise to a holy vigilance and diligence in the divine
 life.

life. But what is better fitted to call them forth into lively exercise than the daily warfare they have to maintain with the strength of sin in the heart. When is the courage and wisdom of a good general or soldier most displayed? Is it not in the field of battle, where he has an enemy to try his skill, and oppose his power? In like manner, the graces of the Spirit cannot be more properly employed than in contending with, and conquering the body of sin to death. Here the power and strength of these graces are fully tried; and the more they are exercised, the stronger they become. "The spirit fighteth against the flesh, and the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and these two are contrary." In the warfare they maintain, the Christian sensibly "grows in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord."

2. God may suffer indwelling corruption to remain in the heart, on purpose to discover the power and victory of his all-conquering grace. Were there not sin in the heart; were we not sensible of its power and dominion over us at times; were we not called to experience its strength; how should we ever come to the knowledge of the superior power of divine grace? When we witness its victory over sin, do we not see that the grace of our Lord is made sufficient for us; that his strength is perfected in our weakness. If lust after lust be mortified in our breasts; if the interest of the flesh with its affections and lusts be losing ground in our souls; and if the contrary principles be acquiring fresh strength and vigour, can we have a more comfortable evidence of God giving us the mastery and victory in all things? Can we have a clearer proof of his making us more than conquerors, through him who loved us and died for us? Corruption is left in the heart of man only to furnish daily triumphs to the divine Redeemer. It is daily proofs that "greater is he that is for us than he that is against us."

3. God may suffer sin to remain in the hearts of

his people to make and keep them humble. In the well known sermon of our blessed Lord on the mount, the first blessing he pronounced was in favour of humility. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of God." To promote and cherish this temper of mind in all his servants seems to be a principal aim of every part of the œconomy of grace. It is the first work of the Spirit to humble the soul to the very dust: it is the great aim of our Saviour's incarnation and example, and the direct tendency of all his instructions, to make us humble and lowly in mind. Nor is this lost sight of in suffering corruption to remain in any degree in the heart. Though Paul was caught up into the third heavens; though he had glorious manifestations of divine love; yet he is not to be exempted altogether from proofs of infirmity and weakness. "He has a law in his members warring against the law of his mind; he has a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, that he might not be exalted above measure." Nothing can tend more effectually to humble man, than a serious view of the strength and power of sin in the heart. Can he think of the want of conformity in his soul, the want of conformity in his life to the pure standard of the divine law? Can he think how distant he still is from that love, that trust, that hope, that obedience, to which many of the eminent servants of God have attained, and not be humbled in the dust? Can he think of the holiness of God, or the purity of the divine law? Can he daily witness the contrariety to both, that prevails in his heart, and not be clothed with humility? The more the nature and guilt of sin are considered, the more must the consideration inspire with poverty of spirit.

4. God may suffer indwelling corruption to remain in his people, that they may have many errands to a throne of grace. The sweetest complaints that reach a throne of grace are complaints against sin. God, as the hearer and answerer of prayer, loves to hear his people

people importunate at the footstool of mercy; he loves to see them coming with every petition, with every supplication; but his ear, we may believe, is particularly attentive to the cry of that man who feels himself burdened with a body of sin and death. Say what holy delight is there in carrying on a daily intercourse with heaven by the spirit of prayer? Are not the happiest moments a Christian spends on earth those which he spends in fervent prayer to his God? But what is it that brings him most frequently to a throne of grace? What is it that shews him the necessity of prayer and of the divine influence? Is it not the sense and feeling he has of sin in his heart? How careless and remiss in duty would he grow? How cold and languid would he become, were he not carried to a throne of grace by the woeful experience he has of sin! If then a sense of inward corruption be the mean to lead him to a daily trust in God; if it teach him the daily need of the divine presence; if it cherish in him a spirit of prayer, of devotion and communion with God; is not this an important end answered in the œconomy of grace?

5. God may suffer indwelling corruption to remain in his people, to make a difference between their present militant and future triumphant state. While we live in this state of imperfection, it requires but a superficial experience to convince us of the strength and prevalence of corruption in our hearts. Alas! What vain thoughts prevail! What idle words! What undue attachment is discovered to the world! What inordinate love to the creature! What indifference to things divine mark the conduct, and appear in the lives even of God's own children! Here unworthiness and infirmities cleave to the best of them.

But how changed the scene, when there shall be no more sin? In heaven no vain thoughts shall lodge within us. There shall be no unbelief, no hardness of heart, no prevailing corruption, no undue attachments, no misplaced affections, no unbridled passions.

all hearts and eyes shall be placed on him, who is the fountain of life and happiness; all hearts shall be subject to his supreme command. In heaven there shall be no alloy to our happiness. God and Christ shall be all and in all. In this world his people groan, in some measure, under the power of sin. But after all their sighs, and prayers, and struggles for the destruction of the body of sin are over, how delightful will the place of rest be to their souls? It is the firm belief of this that makes the devout believer look and long for the paradise above. There he hopes to serve God without disturbance from any bosom foe, without molestation from any powerful adversary.

It now remains to apply this subject.

1. If such be the power of sin in the heart, we may learn the wonderful condescension of God in accepting any religious performance at our hands. How much are our best services polluted with inward corruption? What are all our duties and performances? Is there not much sin in each of them? In many things we offend all. There is nothing of worth, or merit, in any of them. It must be entirely owing to divine grace that they are accepted in the beloved. How much does it magnify and exalt his mercy, when we view the defiled and polluted oblations of our hearts!

2. From this subject we may infer, that such persons as are not deeply affected with a sense of the guilt and pollution of sin, have no claim to the character of God's people. The more we are acquainted with scripture characters, the more we are acquainted with the bible—we see all the servants of God humbled, grieved, and mourning on account of sin. If this be the characteristic mark of God's people in the world, it is not to be feared that there are many who, while they have a profession of religion, have never known that it is to mourn for their transgressions! Iniquity

may prevail over them : but are they seen bemoaning their condition ? Tears they have for other things ; but they have few, or none, to spare on account of their sins. They can complain of *hard times* ; but who ever heard them complain of *hard hearts* ? Christ may be born, become a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ; he may weep, bleed and die for sin ; but were they ever seen weeping or mourning one moment on account of it ? Nay, do not we see some in every congregation, who, instead of adopting the complaint of the apostle in our text, glory in their sin, and remain obdurately impenitent ? What a shocking sight is it to see men, to see sinners, who boast of their reason and understanding, laughing and making a mock at that, for which Christ bled and died ; to see them without restraint indulging in sin which grieves the Spirit, crucifies the Saviour afresh and insults reason and religion ! Is it not to be feared nay, is it not certain, that God will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh ?

3. Is the power of sin so great : hence we may see the necessity for much humility. Our attainments may have been high ; our evidence of divine love may have been singular and endearing, yet how low should we lie when we reflect, when we feel, that we carry still about with us a body of sin and death ?

4. What shall I say to the serious mind, who is really affected with a sense of sin, and who earnestly wishes to be delivered from it ? Do you conclude harsh and severe things against yourself ? Do you think that your hopes of the divine favour are dark and obscure ; because you have so often experienced the prevalence of sin ? Give not way to desponding thoughts. God has wise reasons for all he does. Your case is not singular. David, Paul, and all his children, have gone before you in the same tract. If you sow in tears with them, like them you shall reap in joy. Give not over the important warfare ; for in due time you shall reap, if you faint not.

Believe

Believe that there remains a rest for the people of God, after all the toils and fatigues of their present journey. Labour therefore in every duty after a due preparation for entering on that eternal rest, where you shall no more be oppressed with a body of sin and death; but ushered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, you shall enjoy perfect repose in the bosom of your Father, in Christ Jesus, to whom be praise and glory for ever. Amen.

SERMON XVII.

HEBREWS, IV. 11.

Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

THE richest, and most striking, metaphorical language has been employed by the inspired writers to give us an idea of the heavenly state. It is called a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; an inheritance that shall be forever; the city of the living God; a crown of righteousness; a crown of glory that fadeth not away; and a kingdom of which there shall be no end. In the text it is represented as a state of rest, or repose. This is an allusion to a memorable æra in the Jewish history, and is used with singular propriety by the apostle, to give the Hebrews at least a faint idea of that felicity which the gospel presented to their view. Freedom from slavery in Egypt; a termination to the tedious and laborious fatigues in the wilderness; an established rest in the fertile and flourishing land of Canaan, were subjects at once familiar and agreeable to their minds, and could not fail to impart peculiar delight. Taught

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from generation to generation by their fathers, the Jews recollected, with pleasure, their deliverance from the chariots and horsemen of Pharaoh; the safety that attended their passage through the Red Sea, and swellings of Jordan; and the tranquillity that followed the wars and toils of forty years spent in desert and trackless paths. It surely cannot fail to afford equal, if not superior pleasure to the Christian, who is wrestling with a body of sin and death, to be assured that heaven is likewise an end to his struggles with his unruly passions, to the temptations of the world, to the opposition of his spiritual enemies, and to the trials and afflictions of life. This seems to be the precise idea contained in the text from the verse immediately preceding it. "For he that is entered into rest hath also ceased from his own works, as God did from his." When God caused order and beauty to spring from the dark and formless mass, by exerting his creative power; when he had filled every region of the universe with proofs of his wisdom and goodness; it is said, "he rested from all his works, which he had made;" pleased with the extensive effects of his beneficence and power. In like manner, man, when he shall have completed the struggle with his unruly passions; when he shall, by the grace of his God, have conquered the temptations of the world; when he shall have received the victory over Satan; when he shall be raised above the trials and afflictions of life, and made every way fit, by the Spirit of God, to mingle with superior spirits; he shall rest from his own works as God did from his.

According to this view of the subject, we shall, in the first place, illustrate each of these particulars.

Secondly, shew what is implied in the exhortation itself, "Let us labour;" concluding with a particular illustration of the motive mentioned in the text.

I. Heaven is a rest from the struggle with our unruly passions.

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The passions are implanted in man for the best and noblest purposes ; they create all that useful activity which we every where behold. Hence they have been called, *The elements of life*. While under strict and regular government ; while subdued by the Spirit, and obedient to the word of God, they are the source of whatever is great and interesting in the history of man : but, when misapplied, when they are not subject to the grace of God, they become the origin of all that deforms and embitters human life. The irresistible lightning of heaven is not more destructive to the beauty of the spring, than the disorder of the passions to the felicity of man. To combat, and with firmness and resolution to conquer them, is the first and principal part of the warfare in which we are, as the heirs of the grace of life, engaged. But to obtain this conquest, requires strength more than human. Unless God be for us, in vain shall we begin the unequal contest. We may as soon think to conquer the world with our own single arm, as conquer the weakest passion in our breasts, without the strength and power of our God. Even when his grace is vouchsafed, to obtain a conquest over our own hearts requires many a vigilant and painful effort. It is compared in scripture to the plucking out a right eye ; to the cutting off a right hand. The most austere and rigid discipline becomes necessary ; most vigorous and unremitting attention must be employed : the least relaxation is dangerous. We must ever be on the watch to keep our hearts with all diligence ; for out of them are the issues of life. In every advancing stage of the divine life ; in every part of our sanctification, this attention is highly requisite. For even in our most confirmed state, the soul is in danger from the strength and power of latent corruption. In the best regulated breasts, like noxious weeds in the best cultivated soil, the corruptions of the heart spring up and retard the growth of the religious affections. Often have the most eminent servants

servants of God experienced this. A distinguished apostle acknowledged that he felt a law in his members warring against the the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin, which was in his members. It was for that reason he poured out the bitter complaint, expressive of the burden and sorrow he felt, occasioned by such discord and opposition. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" How often does a serious view of the purity of the divine law, and the strictness of divine justice on the one hand; an humbling view of the frailties and failures of human nature, the remembrance of guilt, the hardness and insensibility of heart, and the coldness and languor of the affections on the other, all arising from the strength and power of inward corruption, deprive the devout mind of confidence, fill it with darkness and doubt, and create much anxiety during its warfare on earth? In the experience of the Christian are many serious and vexing moments; many arduous struggles, from the first steps of the divine life to that advanced station, when he can say with a modest satisfaction, "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight of faith; I have finished my course." 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7.

Heaven, then, is a place of safety from such vexatious contests; from such painful struggles with the corruptions of our desperately wicked and deceitful hearts. It presents us with a scene of perfect tranquillity. No discordant feeling disturbs the harmony; no jarring interrupts the holy calm of that blessed place. The strife of passions, and the strength of corruptions shall be unknown, and unfelt. There peace and concord for ever reign. When we come to the close of life, the battle ceases; victory and triumph ensue. To retreat from the field of combat, crowned with victory, is a pleasant and captivating sight to mortals: but what is a conqueror, surrounded with all the

the splendour of military glory, compared with a Christian entering heaven in complete triumph; having received, by the power of his Almighty Redeemer, the mastery in all things; having been enabled to fight the good fight of faith? He enters into that rest which Christ purchased and has gone before to prepare; a rest from human folly and from human passion. Perhaps long and serious was the contest. Much anxiety, many perplexing hours arose from the engagement. Often did the Christian flee to a throne of grace, beseeching heaven to make him strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Often did he walk and pray that he might obtain the government of himself. His perils, however, are now at an end. He has now finished his voyage of life, where contending elements had often tended to distract his mind; where ruin and devastation appeared thick and frequent around him; he enters into his haven of rest; the white robe, the palm of victory, and the crown of righteousness shall be brought forth to adorn him, as more than a conqueror through him who loved and died for him.

2. Heaven is a rest from the temptations of the world. The corruptions of the heart, and the temptations of sense, seem to have formed a conspiracy against our repose. The one assails from within, the other attacks us from without. Ever since the apostacy and disobedience of the first man, the corruptions of the heart have formed a league among themselves to rule the soul with despotic sway. The world is a foe no less formidable to our religious interests and happiness. In our earliest entrance on existence, it presents the young and inexperienced mind with a scene of deception, that too often proves fatal in the close of life. It grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength. While in the world, we are ever in danger of prostituting our time, our powers, and our talents, in the pursuit and acquisition of vanity. Nothing appears in its genuine light. The delusion is spread deep on every surrounding

rounding object. Nothing but the word and Spirit of God can strip the temptations of the world of their dark disguise. Nothing but the sufficiency of his almighty arm can enable us to refuse that cup of fascination, which the world, with winning address, holds out to us; nothing but this can enable us to keep the direct path of duty, where temptations thicken around us; where they flatter on purpose to betray; where they display their treacherous beauty in order to work our ruin. In such a perilous situation, the most distinguished servants of God have been seen to stagger, or to draw back for a season. What happiness must we then feel, to be removed at a distance from such a trying, dangerous, and ensnaring scene! where the graces of the Spirit, like plants in an unnatural climate, seldom flourish; where every thing tends to retard their growth; where they often sicken and suffer a sad decay.

Heaven then is this place of rest: It opens to us an unmolested retreat from the blasting influence of temptation. From a scene of perplexing intoxication the Christian retires; he enters into rest; and, untroubled, from the quiet mansions of bliss beholds the storm of temptation and sin raging below. Placed beyond the reach of every hostile attack, he rests from his labours, and his works do follow him. Nothing shall deceive, nothing shall defile, in all the Mount of God. Heaven is not an enemy's ground, but a mansion of rest prepared by your best friend and Redeemer for your reception. There you shall not dread the wiles or stratagems of any foe. Your safety shall be in him who is the munition of rocks. Your hearts shall no more be divided between God and the world; your affections shall no more be misplaced, or wasted in the pursuit of shadows: "God shall dwell in you, and lead you to fountains of living water."

3. Heaven is a rest from the opposition of Satan, and every spiritual enemy.

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Were inward corruptions, or the temptations of the world, the only enemies we had to encounter, victory would not be so difficult an acquisition. But on the side of these powerful opponents stand a combined host of inveterate foes, waiting, with deep rooted malice, to destroy both our hopes and our happiness. "They are come down," saith the scripture, "having great wrath, because they know they have but a short time." Our adversary goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. We have to stand against the wiles of the devil; to quench the darts of the wicked one. How dangerous the field, where such infernal hostilities take place; where the combat is so unequal? "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places." He who deceived our first parents, waits only a fit opportunity to deceive you. He, who stood at the right hand of Joshua the high priest to resist him, stands in opposition to resist you. He that provoked David to number the people, will also try to tempt you to lean to your own understanding, to place your confidence in the flesh. He that sought to plague and to destroy the patriarch Job, will seek to plague and destroy you. He that tempted our Lord, will also molest you with his most violent and artful attacks. He that put it into the heart of Judas to betray his master, will endeavour to seduce you from every attachment to your Lord. He that put it into the heart of Ananias to lie unto the Holy Ghost, will also try to put it into your hearts to deal treacherously with God and your own souls.—In possession of so much art, superior in strength, and impelled on with malignity of design, nothing inferior to an omnipotent arm can sustain you *in these fiery trials*. Believe it, on every hand the ruin of your integrity is threatened: for should these enemies fail in their attack in one quarter, they will try every method and strata-

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gem to render you vulnerable ; then to undermine your hopes ; and, last of all, to sink you in perdition. With additional fury they will repeat their assaults, and labour, by every effort within the reach of their malice, to surround you with the error of the wicked ; to encompass you with the snares of death. Think not that you are secure, because your danger is unseen. What more invisible than the thunderbolt of heaven ? What more invisible than the stroke of the earthquake ? And yet, do not these often overwhelm with unexpected and irretrievable ruin. From such formidable and malignant foes ; from a scene of such danger and alarm, the Christian enters into rest—into the peaceful abodes of the blessed, where he can bid defiance to all his enemies. Beyond the grave, no weapon can wound, no infernal enemy annoy. Eternal quiet and serenity surround the throne of God. Instead of combating the invisible powers of darkness, the saint shall be united, in divine eternal friendship, with angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. These shall ever exert their superior powers, in making him happy by unceasing acts of love. Add to this (which is most comfortable of all,) the Saviour of men, who now beholds the saints travelling to heaven, through much tribulation, “ taking it by violence,” shall then solace them with his presence, surround them with perpetual tranquillity, and secure their endless felicity.

But, in the last place, heaven is a rest from the trials and afflictions of life.

The particulars which we have already mentioned, are among the chief of those difficulties from which we are freed by our entrance on the heavenly state ; but, distinct from these are the trials and afflictions of life. The word of God informs us, that “ man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards ; that his life hangs in doubt before him ; that most of his days are sorrow, and travel, and grief.” Our own experience well accords with this language, and soon

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convinces us that, from the wailing state of infancy to the concluding scenes of infirm and declining old age, the life of man is nothing else, in many respects but a mournful and disconsolate tale! Were we to look into the world at present, what station, what situation in life is there, which may not be compared to a ceaseless warfare? And the more we look back on the annals of time, do not we agree with the sages and historians, who have gone before us, in pronouncing the history of the human race a *continued tragedy*. The Christian has trials and afflictions, sent by divine providence, peculiar to himself. It is well he is assured that these are among his chartered privileges; else soon would his spirits sink and his faith fail. What miseries and distresses often arise to him, from the connections he has formed in life! He sees them without the fear of God, or any sense of religion impressed on their minds. He sees them living without God, and without hope in the world. This is a fruitful and painful source of uneasiness to the serious Christian. He stands perhaps connected with some by ties strong and binding, whom he has reason to fear are reserved to the day of wrath, and the righteous revelation of God. No sorrow can befall those who touch us on every side, without inflicting a wound into our heart. If we rejoice with them that do rejoice, we are also called to weep with those who weep. But, should the Christian feel no anxiety from the state and circumstances of those with whom providence has nearly connected him! Should they prove to him, what they ever ought to be, pillars of rest or the balm of life? Yet they have no continuance here. The tenderest pledges of our love; our most endeared friends; drop off on every side, and leave the servant of God the sad survivor of happier days. He often stands alone in the solitary place, to regret their sudden and mournful departure. But, should no uneasiness, no affliction arise to the Christian from these near and tender connections in life; yet what can

can protect him from the malice and opposition of a world that lieth in wickedness? "Ye are not of the world, and therefore, the world hateth you." Hatred, variance, and strife often stand in a formidable array against us, prepared to pierce us through with many sorrows, and embitter the remaining parts of our journey. He who would live godly in Christ Jesus must lay his account with persecution from the world; so it persecuted Christ himself, his prophets, his apostles, and righteous servants, ever since the cause of truth was maintained on earth. But should the disciple of Jesus be happy enough to escape the ill nature of the world, yet there remains a source of sorrow and distress behind—the fluctuation and inconstancy of human affairs. This, of itself, will be sufficient to give the severest wounds to a reflecting mind. We set out in life with intemperate fondness; but we proceed not far in our progress when we are called to experience disappointment, in our most flattering and sanguine hopes; our finest and best concerted schemes proving abortive; and our dreams of happiness evanishing into nothing.

But suppose all these to answer our expectations; suppose they should attend us for a season; alas! like the beauty of the spring, when blasted by the noxious hale, they soon disappear, and leave behind them lasting memorials of decay. Inconstancy and change are stamped upon every earthly enjoyment. The affairs of life are in continual motion around us. This moment we may be blest with worldly comfort and prosperity; and the next, it may be our lot to groan under the pressure of adversity. Such are a few of the sources of sorrow and suffering to the children of God. The changes of life disturb and ruffle their spirits. Their hopes, their fears, their desires, their connections, all combine to render the world a distressing scene; a troublesome warfare. "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable."

Heaven then is a place of rest, and a happy conclusion to these afflictions and sorrows. There the tumults of the world are hushed, and all its cares and distressing sorrows lost in endless oblivion; or, if they are remembered at all, they only serve to give the redeemed in heaven a more exquisite relish of eternal rest. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest." There the treachery, or misconduct of friends; the hatred of the world; the changes of life shall never disturb or interrupt our repose. "Now we sow in tears, but then we shall reap in joy." Our present afflictions shall be an introduction to an exceeding and an eternal weight of glory. Leaving behind us a sky boisterous and inclement, where nothing but a universal gloom often appeared, we shall enter into that happy world where "light is, indeed, sown to the righteous, and gladness to the upright in heart."

This seems to be the simple and natural view of the heavenly rest which is directly implied in the text. And does not even this short, and imperfect view strengthen the faith and enliven the desires of the Christian pilgrim? Keeping in your eye the glorious objects set before you, are you not incessantly labouring to obtain the possession of them? Thinking not that you have attained, or are already perfect, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Live much under the power of the world to come. The hope of this heavenly rest will cheer your drooping souls in hours of deep sorrow; will lighten the heavy burdens of life; will smooth the rugged path you have still to travel, and inspire you with fortitude to combat every contending foe. Labour to attain the lively exercise of faith in the great realities of an unseen world. Dwell often on that pleasant and happy land of promise. A comfortable sense of your interest in Jesus, who is now preparing mansions of eternal repose to all his followers, will reconcile you to every frowning dispensation.

penetration of providence, and enable you to submit with cheerfulness to the loss of your choicest earthly blessings. Think on that happy state, where you shall never be in danger of losing the objects of your affections, where you shall be delivered from all sin, and corruption, and enjoy your God and Saviour in the heights of happiness for ever. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours and their works do follow them. Be ye therefore followers of those, who through faith and patience do now inherit the promises." They were once pilgrims and strangers on earth as you now are; they wrestled, and laboured, and fought, and obtained the victory. And you shall also overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and at last shall be admitted into that heavenly state, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

S E R M O N XVIII.

HEBREWS, iv. 11.

Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

“**I**F in this life only,” says the apostle Paul, “we had hope in Christ, we would of all men be most miserable.” Exposed to many sore temptations; called to contend with an host of foes; and at times oppressed with fears and perplexities, the heart of the Christian traveller would soon faint, and his hands turn feeble, if he enjoyed not the prospect of sweet repose after all the toils and dangers of his pilgrimage. Unbelief may sometimes so far prevail as to raise doubts in his mind concerning his interest in the promise of eternal rest. Losing sight of the heavenly country, to which he is bending his unremitting course, he begins to fear that he shall come short of the rest which remains for the people of God. In this perplexed and fearful situation, the promises of strength equal to his day, are found to be sweet and refreshing. He knows that he shall never obtain the crown of glory if he fight not for it: he knows

knows that he shall never enter into the mansions of eternal repose, if he persevere not in the path of duty; to him the exhortation in our text comes with peculiar energy: "Labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

In last discourse, I endeavoured to illustrate the happiness of the heavenly world, as represented to our view in our text under the idea of a state of rest.

Heaven, it was observed, is a rest from all our present struggles with our unruly passions. It is a scene of perfect tranquillity; there, the strife of passions, and the strength of corruptions shall be unknown and unfelt. It is also a rest from the temptations of the world. Heaven opens to us an unmolested retreat from the blasting influence of temptation. There, the frowns and the smiles of this vain world shall be no more; the fiery darts of the wicked one shall never reach that happy place. Besides, heaven is a rest from all the trials and afflictions of this life; it is a happy conclusion to all our sorrows. There the tumults of the world are over, and all its cares and distresses lost in endless oblivion; or, if remembered, they only serve to render this rest more sweet and refreshing. I now proceed,

II. To shew what is implied in the exhortation, "Let us labour."

Even after the superficial view which we have taken of the heavenly rest, we are the more prepared to enter on this part of the subject, and, with the greater probability of success, to secure your compliance with it. For exhortations are vain and ineffectual, unless some object of consequence is brought into view. Men will ever exert themselves in proportion to the value and importance of the objects, to the possession of which their desires are directed. The Spirit of God knows they can seldom be roused by trivial and insignificant objects. The gospel, therefore,

therefore, always places something great, interesting, and permanent, before our eyes, in order to excite us to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Such is the rest, which we have just now described. Is it not great, interesting, and permanent?

1. When the Christian labours to enter into rest, he has a firm belief in the reality and existence of such a rest.

The persons, to whom this exhortation was at first addressed, entertained a firm and steady faith of a future and glorious rest awaiting the people of God. They believed that Jesus had gone into heaven, as their forerunner and advocate, to prepare a place of rest for them. They felt themselves begotten again to the lively hope of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. They lived under the daily influence of this hope. They experienced the power of that "faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for." When we labour to enter into that rest, like them, our hearts must be under the influence of this divine principle. Without faith; without an implicit credit given to the testimony of God, it is impossible for any part of the gospel to profit our souls. Although there were ten thousand heavens, if we did not believe in their reality and existence, what influence would they have upon our temper and conduct? If we would labour to enter into this rest, we must think much of heaven; it must be habitually present with us in our thoughts. By prayer and meditation we must rise to the excellent glory; to the city of the living God; to the new Jerusalem: If we never direct our prayers thither; if we do not fix our meditations on the promised mansions; if our hopes and affections never rise to the throne of God; if our views are never extended beyond the limits of this world; in no sense can we be said to labour to enter into this rest.

2. When we labour to enter into this rest, it implies

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plies that we are earnest to obtain the end we have in view. Earnestness of spirit is the foundation of all the useful labours of man. It must mingle its influence in the acquisition of every thing that is important. Where an earnest spirit is wanting, little that is either great or beneficial to society can be produced. When it exists and operates with full force, almost nothing is insurmountable to man. But when an earnest spirit flows from faith, from the grace of God in the heart; when it becomes a divine and religious principle, to what extent of obedience and love will it not carry a man? "I can do all things," says Paul, "through Christ strengthening me." The Christian, when invigorated by an earnestness of spirit, is seen to perform actions that lay claim in some measure to immortality. He rises above himself, and appears in a commanding and respectable light. The moment he considers himself as connected with both worlds—with eternity as well as time, he feels his mind ready for every good word and work. He begins to know then what it is to be deeply affected in a good cause; to contend earnestly for the faith, and to be zealous towards God. It is impossible, if the faith of the gospel be in our hearts, for us ever to discover a coldness and languor, when an eternal weight of glory is the prize in view. Is there a period in our lives, at which we wish to make a timely retreat from the world; when we flatter ourselves with the possession of all the tranquil circumstances of old age. To attain this what ceaseless toil do we not employ? Is not this the end of all our labours, "our sore travel under the sun?" With what ingenuity, with what earnestness do we invent means, form schemes, to arrive at this calm and undisturbed station? And shall the momentary retirement which precedes the close of life give rise to such bustle and activity; and shall we remain careless about being put in possession, not of a temporal retreat only, but of a perpetual sanctuary of repose,
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in the presence of God? Shall the men of the world lose sight of no purpose which they design, and no passion they wish to gratify? To their outward idols shall they sacrifice the night and the day, and yet Christians sit down in indolence and sloth? Shall the children of this world be wiser than the children of light? Let us then discover an earnestness proportioned to the objects we have in view; for, if no anxious wish; if no earnest desire possess our hearts; trust me, the gate of heaven will for ever be shut against us. Immortal rest is too valuable a blessing, and purchased at too dear a rate to be bestowed on a mind that never felt one generous, one longing desire after it. To labour then to enter into rest is, under the influence of divine faith, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God, to discover the utmost vigour of mind and earnestness of spirit in the work and service of God.

3. When we labour to enter into this rest, it implies diligence.

Would we wish to be happy on earth, apply we must. Would we wish to be happy in heaven, it is equally necessary not to be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. It is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich in spiritual as well as temporal concerns: "Slothfulness," says Solomon, "casteth into a deep sleep." It proves an insurmountable obstruction to every kind of promotion among men; and can we think to reach the mansions of bliss with folded arms? Is the world juster than God, in the distribution of its favours? Is honour, power, and wealth conferred only on the industrious and active; and shall the treasures of immortality be bestowed on indolent and dormant minds? How absurd the thought! The real Christian, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, reasons after a different manner. He feels the love of Christ powerfully constraining him to live to the honour and praise of his Redeemer. He feels and reasons with himself

himself—if he were to live ten thousand years in the world; and if he had the excellence of ten thousand angels, they would all be too little to be employed in, and devoted to the service of him who loved and died for him. A loving soul will always be a willing, a diligent and an obedient soul. The time was when he knew what it was to be diligent in the service of sin and of Satan. Restless, he hurried on from one act of sinful obedience to another; but ever since divine love touched his heart; ever since Jesus arrested him in his mad career of wickedness, and opened his eyes to see his guilty state, he has been zealous and diligent in the work of his God. This diligence indeed is not designed to merit at the hand of God: No; he knows when he has done all, he is still an unprofitable servant. His obedience and diligence are natural expressions of gratitude, which he cannot restrain, for the countless mercies his God and Saviour bestows. He is diligent, because he is pardoned; he is diligent because Christ is formed in him the hope of glory, he is diligent because he has the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him; he is diligent, because he is made an heir of the grace of life; he is diligent, because his Saviour was so diligent, so intent in plucking him as a brand from the burning. Animated by these motives he thinks he can never—never do too much for Christ. The more that divine love is contemplated; the more it warms the heart; the more will it call forth the active powers of man, and place them, on their original and worthiest objects. This has been its uniform effect in all ages of the church. Hence terms, that imply the strongest exertions of man are employed in scripture to give us an idea of Christian activity. We are enjoined to watch, to strive, to run, to fight, to wrestle. When, therefore, we remain in a state of supineness; when we do not discover diligence in making our calling and election sure; little do we think that we are acting in direct opposition to the temper and spirit of the gospel, and in opposition to
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the wisdom of heaven, which prescribes nothing in vain; little do we think that we are grieving the Spirit, which is designed to seal us unto the day of redemption; little do we think that we are crucifying the Lord of life afresh, and putting him to open shame; little do we think that we are attempting to render his labours ineffectual; to obstruct the triumphs of his cross from spreading far and wide over the world; and thereby to diminish his joy; and even endeavouring to tear the laurels of victory from his sacred temples. Let us then gird up the loins of our mind; let us quit ourselves like men: Be not intimidated to make haste to keep the commandments of your God: Our powers may be feeble, our resolutions may be unstable as water; from heaven we have the assurance of fresh supplies of the divine Spirit to strengthen our weakness; to confirm our resolutions; and to keep alive the warmth of every devout and religious affection. While such assistance is afforded, let us cheerfully embrace it, and in our lives bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness. We embark with ardour in the adventurous schemes of life, without the promise of such aid. Single, and unsupported, we strain every nerve in finishing our own darling pursuits. Why then remain lifeless and unconcerned, when the veracity of heaven is pledged to give power proportioned to our frailty. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you," is the benevolent call of heaven. In every hour of trial; in every difficulty, the Spirit waiteth to sustain our infirmities. He is ever ready to stretch forth an omnipotent, though invisible arm, to succour us when we are tempted; to make his grace sufficient for us, and to crown our every struggle in the cause of truth with success.—From this train of thought you will see that an indolent, lifeless, Christian is as great an absurdity, as to say *a dark sun*, or *a sultry winter*.

4. When we labour to enter into this rest, it im-

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plies that we persevere, ever keeping our eye steadily upon it.

In the attainment of every important object in life, perseverance becomes absolutely necessary. In the ordinary affairs of the world, nothing is, or can, be acquired, without the most steady perseverance. Eminence in knowledge; eminence in every thing, is the effect of what? Not of a few occasional efforts; but of an uninterrupted care and attention. And, in religious concerns can we think it not necessary? Shall we observe it in the most trifling pursuits on earth, but as soon as eternal rest is in view, deem it useless and improper. Such a conclusion is absurd and irrational. Persevere we must, as the grand mean of entering into this rest. In the acquisition of a meetness for the heavenly rest; the Spirit of God makes us to abound more and more, and to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. Animated by the principles of the divine life, we do not rest satisfied with former attainments; but, forgetting the things that are past, and reaching to those that are before, we press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus. We become more and more perfect with the Lord, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, not for a day, or any stated portion of our time, but to the end. The graces of the Christian life resemble the light of the morning, which gaineth brighter and brighter to the perfect day. With this view, we must consider our religious concerns as the chief business in life; and go on from strength to strength in a regular course of spiritual improvement, till we attain "the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus." For, should we begin a religious course, and not advance by a persevering spirit, what is this but to raise a superstructure only in part, and then foolishly leave it to totter and decay, exposed on every hand to the inclemency of the weather, and the violence of the storm. By building to-day, and
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pulling down to-morrow, we shall never rear a temple for the residence of the Holy Spirit in our souls. Mistake me not, if you imagine I call you to a perseverance that shall know not the least languor or interruption. Fatal experience convinces us that it is but rarely vouchsafed to man. But nothing hinders our application in the Christian life, from resembling the circulation of the blood in the natural. It does not always and at all times flow with equal briskness. It has not always the same strength and vigour; but it never ceases, and death alone is what puts a period to its activity. If we would labour to enter into religion in this manner, we must, "by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality—we must continue faithful unto death;" with a constant pace, labouring to enter into that rest that awaiteth the people of God. And, in order to engage us to observe this persevering, this earnest, and diligent spirit in the service of our Redeemer,

I shall now illustrate the motive suggested in the text. "Lest any man fall, after the same example of unbelief." A serious consideration of this motive for a few moments, will show us how requisite it is to make religion our chief and principal business in life.

We learn from it that, without a constant attention to the state of our souls, we shall for ever be excluded from the presence of God. This is clearly demonstrated by a striking fact in the history of the Jews, to which the text alludes. When God had brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and manifested his all-conquering power in the many miracles wrought on purpose to confirm their faith, in the tedious and fatiguing journey through the wilderness: these singular interpositions of the divine favour, instead of rendering them docile and obedient, made them more turbulent and rebellious. Although they had tasted the divine bounty in a miraculous manner; and

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though they had received fresh and frequent tokens of the Almighty's protection and favour; yet, stubborn and stiff-necked, they yielded not that assent to the divine promises, which the least sense of duty so loudly called for; they disbelieved the Most High, and fell dreadful victims to their own folly and impiety.

This is a memorable event in the history of the world, and demonstrates, in the most alarming manner, the fatal and dangerous consequences of disbelieving the veracity of heaven. Think not then that the threatenings of God are weak and impotent. Dreadful is the delusion, when we think, he has said it, but will not perform; that he has revealed his wrath from heaven, but will not inflict it. Does not a perusal of the history of providence contradict such a rash and presumptuous conclusion? What is it in a thousand instances but a history of the divine vengeance, powered down on the workers of iniquity. Witness the ruin of the fallen angels; the fatal apostacy of man; the subversion of cities; the downfall of kingdoms and empires; the extirpation of armies; the plagues, diseases and pestilence; the famine and wars that have visited and desolated our world. Do not these proclaim aloud in our ears, that the throne of God is already erected for judgement? And ought we not to consider them as so many warnings; so many benevolent beacons to prevent us from foundering on the same rock. This is the use which our apostle wishes we should make of these awful judgements, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, x. 6—11. "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat, to drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell, in one day, three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of these also tempted, and were destroyed of

“serpents. Neither murmur ye; as some of them also
 “murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer
 “Now all these things happened unto them for en-
 “samples; *and they are written for our admonition*
 “upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

Alarmed, therefore, with such signal displays of the righteous judgements of heaven, ought we not to make a wise improvement of them, and to reason after this manner: If the Jews fell in the wilderness if they were not permitted to enter into rest, because of unbelief; if disobedience to the word spoken by angels received such a just recompence of reward how shall we escape, if we follow their footsteps? If we reject the promises and despise the threatening of him, who can both kill and make alive; with whom are the issues of life and of death; what reason have we to expect a better fate? Are the threatening under the gospel dispensation more mild against sinners that continue impenitent? Is the power of the legislator diminished? Is the turpitude of the crime of unbelief less heinous; and, thereby, does it merit mitigated and a less severe punishment? The quite contrary is the case. For, if we imitate the Jews in their infidelity; if we do not labour to enter into rest; the famines and desolations, and earthquakes and fiery serpents, and perpetual exclusion from the earthly Canaan, will be light and trivial in comparison of that wrath—that fearful looking for of judgement—that fiery indignation which shall consume us.

“He that despised Moses law, died without mercy
 “under two or three witnesses; of how much more
 “punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy,
 “thy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God
 “and hath counted the blood of the covenant, where
 “with he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath
 “done despite unto the Spirit of grace?”

The superior advantages which we enjoy shall bring upon us proportioned condemnation. The additional light which shines around us shall only

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serve to lead us, with greater certainty, to aggravated perdition. We shall see our destruction; we shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty; we shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. The dark chambers of despair shall be our eternal habitations; that place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

Farther, let us learn from what you have heard to give the fullest assent to the testimony of God. Let us have the most firm and unshaken belief in his word; and with a steadfast confidence, and full assurance of faith, in every state, rely on the accomplishment of the divine promises. To this principle, let us ever join an awe and reverence for the power and threatnings of heaven. Let the terrors of the Lord, as well as a firm trust in his veracity, make us active in the discharge of every holy duty. Under their united influence, let every period of our lives be marked with religious usefulness; then shall we be able to say, that the day of our death is better unto us than the day of our birth, in the hopes of that eternal rest, which God, who cannot lie, hath promised through Christ.

To conclude, we may hence see the importance, and issue of religion—eternal rest. This is the great object presented to view by all the doctrines, by all the promises, and all the duties of the gospel. To this the people of God direct their attention in all their exercises of devotion, and in all the means of grace. Next to the divine glory, they labour for this rest that remains for them in the heavenly world. Under the happy influence of the animating principle of hope, they press forward through every difficulty and danger: nor do they give over the important warfare till they have obtained a complete victory. Then they shall enter into those heavenly mansions where there is nothing to disturb their repose; where they shall see *his* face, who hath

loved them to the death ; and shall dwell in his immediate presence for ever. If such be your hopes ; if such be the views you entertain of a future world ; let every portion of your time be spent in preparing for that eternal blessedness. Attend to the exhortation of the apostle : " Having, therefore, these promises, " dearly beloved, cleanse yourselves from all filthiness " of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the " fear of the Lord. Set your affections on things " above, and not on things on the earth ; for you are " dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God ; and " when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, ye also " shall appear with him in glory ; and be made partakers of that rest which remaineth for the people of " God."

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SERMON XIX.

REVELATION xxii. 4.

And they shall see his face——

THE book of Revelation closes the canon of scripture. It is one of the most mysterious as well as sublime pieces of inspiration. It is mysterious on account of the many predictions contained in it, which circumstances and events only are entitled to interpret. It is sublime, on account of those interesting revolutions and subjects which it describes, in all the majesty of eastern language. Most of the predictions concern the advancement and decline, the condition and changes of the church on earth. Most of the descriptions relate to that triumph and glory which will succeed the present warfare and debasement of the people of God. When the inspired writer would fix our attention on these last, he is always perspicuous and majestic in his style. After describing the saints as involved in great tribulation; as killed with the sword, with hunger, and with death; in order to dissipate this gloom, and to fortify the minds of Christians with patience, he discloses the end and object of their hopes. He frequently

quently represents their fellow-servants and fellow-sufferers, who have gone before them, as arrayed in white robes, as having palms in their hands, and crowns on their heads. Heaven itself is described as a city, to intimate the pleasing intercourse and society which shall take place—having a temple in it, to signify that devotion and worship, which shall be paid to the Judge of all. It is a city beautified with a pure river of the water of life, “clear as chrystal,” “proceeding out of the throne of God and the “Lamb,” emblematical of the influences of that Spirit which shall for ever refresh, cement and animate the society of the blessed. It is a city that has in the midst of the street, and of either side of the river, “a tree of life,” to teach us that no deadly poison shall be conveyed to the minds of those, who shall be honoured and allowed to taste of its fruits; that they shall no more feel the sad and mortal effects of degeneracy, “for the leaves of the tree are for the “healing of the nations; there shall be no more “curse.”

These are images designed to strike the imagination. In other places we find those circumstances that shall constitute a principal source of our felicity, enumerated in the simplest terms—“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither shall there be any more pain; for former things are passed away.—New heavens and a new earth shall arise.” In the midst of these the Saviour shall reside, and his servants shall serve him: “They shall see his face.”

In discoursing on this subject, I shall, through divine assistance, illustrate and open up to you, what is implied in this source of our future happiness; concluding with a practical improvement.

In whatever light we view the nature and condition of man, we must agree with the words of inspiration:

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“That the Almighty crowneth him with loving-kindness and tender mercy.” At present he occupies a high place among the works of God. He bears his image, and is made after the divine likeness. The miraculous interpositions of divine providence, in every age of the world, paving the way for the accomplishment of man’s salvation, shew also what a favourite he is of heaven. Every part of the dispensation of grace, as in the hands of a Mediator, demonstrates, beyond doubt, the friendship of the Almighty. It is here we are taught to consider the human race as peculiar objects of divine clemency—of God’s parental care. We are already the sons of God. We stand connected with the Redeemer of the world by the most endearing ties. By his free and sovereign grace he hath adopted us into his family, and given us a right to all the privileges of his covenant, well ordered in all things and sure. In consequence of this, various and signal are the blessings which, even in this life, we enjoy. The bounties of his providence ever surround us as tokens of his covenant-love. The riches of his grace, and the light of his countenance give internal tranquillity and happiness. These are comfortable evidences of his mercy and loving-kindness to our souls. “But it doth not yet appear what we shall be.” Still greater and richer sources of divine love and mercy shall be opened to our view in the world to come. In the objects around us, so far as is suitable to our imperfect nature, our heavenly Father discovers evident designs to sweeten our present existence. In the plan of redemption, he appears plenteous in mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. Hence we already feel his love shed abroad in our souls. In the hours of solitude and retirement we are permitted to draw near unto him, and to prostrate ourselves at his footstool. In these exercises of devotion, we are conscious of an inward joy arising from so sacred and solemn approaches to the Father of mercies. But all these are as nothing when compared with what

what is to be revealed. The text informs us, that the highest and most delightful expressions of his favour are reserved for a future state, "when we shall see his face." Great as our present discoveries are, we are assured by the apostle that we see through a glass darkly. We can have but faint and limited conceptions of the heavenly glory. Mysterious obscurity now surrounds the invisible glory of our Saviour, and intercepts our immediate vision of him. He stands at an awful distance from human perception. "He makes darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him are dark waters and thick clouds of the sky." But our text informs us of a period that is approaching, when he shall come forth from his seat of majesty, arrayed in divine glory, and shall be the object of holy vision and wonder to every redeemed soul. This is the particular source of happiness to which the text confines our attention—the immediate vision and enjoyment of our Saviour's presence and glory. Were we allowed to choose our own happiness, could we fix on any thing higher or more noble than this—to be allowed to contemplate the Saviour of the world; to stand in his presence; and to behold the splendour of his glory. "It is good to be here," said Peter, when he witnessed our Saviour's transfiguration on the Mount, which was only a faint and partial display of the divine effulgence? What extacy may not the redeemed company expect to feel, when they shall see their king in his perfect beauty; when they shall have such resplendent views of his nature? Does the believing soul now rejoice in the contemplation of the Saviour, even when his glory is seen through a glass darkly, or as it might be translated, in a riddle; when light and obscurity, knowledge and ignorance of his nature are so blended together as to cover the divinity from mortal eye? What delight and holy joy shall pass through the mind of the glorified saint, when every veil shall be taken away; when he shall behold him

face to face; when he shall see him as he is—a glorified, enthroned Redeemer, invested with supreme power in heaven and in earth.

Formerly, Jesus veiled his glory under the form of a servant. In the days of his flesh, he was despised and rejected of men—a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. An ungrateful world abused him; a treacherous Judas betrayed him; ruffian violence dragged him before an earthly tribunal; and daring insolence itself stretched forth its hand to buffet him. He voluntarily submitted unto death, even the death of the cross—one of the most excruciating agonies of torture that human cruelty could invent. He was numbered with those who slept in the grave, and was under the power of death for a time. To such a low state of degradation and suffering did the Son of God submit, for the most gracious and merciful purposes. But in heaven we shall see him no more a degraded, a bleeding, dying Saviour. When we are allowed to see his face in the heavenly world, we shall see him attended with all the ensigns of dignity and glory. In his human character, he appeared on purpose to be a striking example of humility, of suffering and resignation; to be a singular example of love to men—to men fallen into such a state of imperfection and wretchedness as required the friendly, tempered, and mingled display of the divine excellence; but when we see his face, he shall appear as the brightness of the Father's glory, fitted to inflame the love, command the reverence, and inspire the devotion of heaven.

Did the hearts of the disciples burn within them, as they journeyed to Emmaus, on account of his appearance and conversation; on account of the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth: how shall our hearts burn, when we see him raised to that glory which he had before the world was; invested as our Mediator, with supreme authority; as judge of the universe; as arbiter of the fate of angels and of men?

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A view of Christ, even when we have no other medium but that of faith, has often brightened the countenance with smiles; filled the heart with admiration; softened it into tenderness and love; and diffused a pleasing serenity over the whole frame. To them that believe he is, and ever will be precious. Nay, faith in an unseen Saviour hath inspired the breasts of the martyrs with courage; It has animated them to embrace the stake; and to die with a joyous fortitude in the midst of flames. Jesus, whom they have not seen, they love; in whom, though now they see him not, yet firmly believing, they have rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Powerful and deep-rooted must that love be, arising from a believing view of Christ, in a state of glory, which can thus counterbalance the most painful tortures; which can fill the mind with such heavenly triumph, when the instruments of death, when the gibbet and the ax; the executioner and the flames, are in full and ghastly view. Divine faith and love, at such solemn seasons, must indeed lay fast hold of the heart, penetrate the very soul, and mingle their influence with all the vital powers of the mind. How nervous the language of Rutherford, encouraging his suffering brethren, who were soon to meet the king of terrors: 'Provided I at last see my Saviour's face, and be made happy in his presence, it matters little, whether I go from a gibbet or a scaffold to a grave, or no grave; in a bloody winding sheet (a shroud) or no sheet.'

But we may appeal to the ordinary sensations, and more common instances of the comfort and happiness arising from divine faith, in an unseen Saviour: Say ye, who have felt the love of Christ shed abroad in your hearts, if at present from it spring such inward joy, what felicity do you not expect when you shall see him whom your souls now love, in his Father's kingdom, when faith shall be changed into vision?

Nothing gives more pleasure than a view of those, who are distinguished for magnanimity and greatness
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of soul; who, by a train of beneficent actions have saved their country from impending ruin. With enthusiasm we read the history of such heroes. The mind stands in pleasant astonishment while perusing such subjects; while surveying such objects. Think then on the unspeakable happiness we must enjoy, when viewing the benefactor, and friend, and brother, and Saviour of the human race.

Conquerors, who have filled the world with the fame of their bloodshed and massacres, often stand high in human estimation, and fix the attention and curiosity of ages upon them. But in heaven, when we see our Saviour's face, we shall contemplate him, who conquered death, who destroyed the works of the devil; whose triumphs of love, and not of desolation, have been visible in every region of the earth; whose grace has conquered the hearts of the stoutest sinners, and made them fall down before the throne of mercy; whose almighty arm has rescued millions from eternal misery; whose knowledge has enlightened the nations of the world; whose voice has pointed out the road that leads to heaven, to happiness, and to glory; and whose power has opened to a redeemed world, the gates of immortality.

The sight of a friend, whose sentiments, whose feelings, whose habits are similar to our own; in whom we can put absolute confidence; who interests himself in our welfare, and regards our concerns as his own, must ever give exquisite delight to the feeling mind. Such an object is too amiable not to impart joy to the heart. In heaven then, O Christian, you are to see your best, your worthiest friend—a friend that sticketh closer than a brother; you are to see him in whom you have often placed your firmest confidence; him who has often interested himself in your welfare, who has regarded your concerns as his own.

The sight of a parent, who has directed our early and tender thoughts; who has been careful to instil into our minds good principles; who has trained us

up in a strict regard to piety and religion; who has watched over us with an affectionate care; who has guided our rash and inexperienced youth, by superior wisdom and discretion—the sight of such a parent ever inspires us with a pleasing veneration, with all the sentiments of a grateful mind. Imagine then, what profound veneration and love; what heart-felt satisfaction we shall enjoy when we shall see the Parent of the universe, the Parent of the spiritual offspring of God; him who brought us into existence; who preserved us by his care through the dangers of infancy; who guided us by his wisdom through the bewildering and intricate paths of more advanced years; whose Spirit beautified our minds with grace and understanding; whose word instructed us; whose gospel turned our steps to the way, the truth, and the life everlasting.

In one word, imagine, for it is beyond the powers of language to describe, what felicity shall fill our hearts, when we see him in glory, who was for many ages the theme of the prophets, who is now the song of the redeemed; him in whom all the capital and leading events of providence, from the beginning of time till the consummation of all things, have met and will center; him for whom kings have conquered; for whom nations have been raised, and empires dashed to pieces; him, to whom the praise and adoration of millions have been offered up; whose kingdom endureth for ever, whose commands the hosts of heaven for ever obey. Stationed in his presence and struck with his sensible magnificence, shall not we be also ready to join the heavenly anthem of praise; saying: “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever; for he hath given us a right to the tree of life, to enter in through the gates into the city.” Recollecting our Saviour’s love; the influences of his Spirit, who called us from the power of darkness into his marvellous light; reviewing our former misery and

and wretchedness, and comparing it with our present exaltation and glory, our theme of praise shall rise still higher. "We shall say with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." But lofty as this strain is, here we will not stop. When we see our Saviour's face, we shall recollect his almighty power, which, for ages conducted the hidden and secret springs of providence; which alone was able at last to lift up the mysterious veil that, during the existence of the world, had concealed from mortal eye the wise and steady operations of an omnipotent and invisible agent: at the same time when we behold and think on the number and extent of our Saviour's dominions, our note of wonder and of praise shall still increase: "We shall sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us kings and priests unto our God." Thus when we shall see our Saviour in heaven, we shall feel all the esteem which worth can excite; all the love which excellence can create; all the gratitude due to a benefactor; all the affection of a friend; all the attachment to a parent; all the veneration to a God; heightened by the immediate vision of himself, and by the mutual feelings and similar employments of the saints.

But to be more particular: To see our Saviour's face in glory, must imply that we shall be happy in the enjoyment of perfect love, union, communion, and satisfaction in the presence of God.

1. We shall be happy in the enjoyment of perfect love.

To be admitted to see the face of any person, in common life, is a token of mutual love and friendship. On the other hand, to turn away the face from any one, is always understood as a mark of contempt

and indifference. When the children of God, therefore, shall see the face of their Saviour in heaven, it implies that they shall enjoy the fullest manifestations of his love that their finite and imperfect nature is capable of receiving. From the first dawn of the day-spring from on high in their hearts, to the last breath they draw in this life, how many are the proofs of his love and regard which they experience ! They read his love in all their temporal and spiritual blessings ; they see his covenant-love in every enjoyment, and in every affliction. On some occasions this divine, this holy affection in their breasts, rises into transport and rapture ; it fills their souls with the most enlivening sentiments and emotions ; it raises them above the vanities of time ; and carries out their thoughts to the realities and concerns of eternity. Of all our affections, love is the most cheerful, even when a worldly good, or a sublunary object is the cause that excites it ; but when this divine feeling in our breasts is called forth and cherished by the objects which the gospel presents to view, it produces in the heart sensations, that make us feel a happiness which no worldly enjoyment can impart. But how imperfect, how weak must this principle be in our hearts while in this world, where so many infirmities attend our most improved and confirmed state ; where the glory of God, and the excellencies of his nature, are but imperfectly discovered by us ; and where he communicates only some scanty streams of his love. When we shall see him face to face in heaven, this divine affection in our souls will be wound up to the highest pitch ; it will keep pace with the enlargement of our views, with the growing wonders of his providence, with the increasing proofs of his grace, with the brightening displays of his own glory. As our views open on the mysteries of redemption, on the history of providence, on the excellencies of the great Redeemer ; as our prospects open on all the wonders of his spiritual king-

dom ;

dom; so shall our love increase, and through eternal ages wax stronger and stronger. We shall not then behold him at a distance; we shall not see any of his works covered over with darkness; we shall not see the glory of his salvation with error, or confusion. With a clear and steady eye, we shall discern the wisdom and goodness, the mercy, and power, and holiness of our God, running through all the dispensations of his providence and grace which we witnessed below. A felicity must spring up in the soul upon such discoveries opening to view, of which we cannot in our present circumstances form the most distant conception. Feelings and emotions must pervade and warm the heart, to which we are at present perfect strangers. The Sun of Righteousness will have splendour and beauties which could never enter into our minds in this world to imagine. His ways of providence will have wonders which we never thought of in this state of darkness. His kingdom of grace will have heights and depths, which we shall never be able to measure through eternity. If this divine flame grow and increase, as we see his face more and more, must it not rise to a pitch of happiness and joy, inconceivable by us in our most comfortable hours on earth?

2 To see the Saviour's face must imply perfect union with him in glory.

A principal source of our happiness in this life is acknowledged to arise from union with persons, respected, religious, and devout. What value would life have, if there were no virtuous characters in the world with whom we could associate and be happy? Our nature is formed for union. In heaven the dispositions of the heart are not to be extinguished; but refined, improved, and perfected. Union in heart, temper, and affections, with kindred and redeemed spirits, must therefore constitute a principal part of our happiness, when we are admitted to see the face of Jesus. This ingredient in our future happiness is

felt in some degree even in this life; but how faint and imperceptible in comparison of what it will be, when we shall be joined to the Lord as one spirit.

How pleasant are those moments to the Christian, when he recollects, or feels his will and affections embracing him whom his soul loveth. With infinite delight he unites his heart to the God of his salvation. The more bright the image of his Redeemer is drawn upon his heart, the more closely is he united to him; the firmer and stronger do the bonds become that knit his affections in the cords of love. But say, Christian! how many are the interruptions to this source of your present enjoyment. Temptations prevail; corruptions acquire strength, and damp for a season the pleasures of religion. Afflictions come upon you, as wave follows wave; you are left sometimes to walk in darkness, and to conclude that the mercies of your God are clean gone, Satan is not an unconcerned spectator of these hours of sorrow; and by his suggestions and alarms, he studies, if possible, to make the sky blacker and blacker around you. He lets fly his fiery darts, and tempts you often to call in question your relation and union with the God of mercy. Say, how anxious, how distressing moments are these to your souls? But the period is fast approaching, when you shall see your Saviour's face, and when you shall experience nothing that can weaken or interrupt the fellowship and intercourse between him and your souls. When you enter the paradise above, the power and wrath of Satan are at an end. When you shall see your Saviour's face, temptations, and sin, and fears, and afflictions for ever vanish and flee away. You shall be united with your God, with your Redeemer, with angels, and with the redeemed, in a manner far beyond your present conception and experience. I make no doubt you have tasted the pleasure arising from hearts united by sentiments of the purest friendship. Many of you have experienced the happiness that results from the most sacred union
that

that can take place in this world. You have felt much complacency and delight in the friendship and love of each other. But the union of friendship, the union of marriage, fall far short to give you an idea of that happiness you shall enjoy, when united in a perfect manner to your God. Happy indeed! beyond expression must that soul be into which the feelings and joys of heaven shall be poured; through which the love of God shall be diffused. Happy must that soul be who shall see the "Saviour's face"; who shall, without interruption and without end, enjoy the brightest smiles of his love. Happy indeed, must that soul be, who shall experience the answer of our Saviour's prayer; and it is only in heaven it shall be fully answered: "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." This union will be of a transforming nature; it will change the soul into the likeness and image of God. You know that union with persons has a natural tendency to transform us into their temper, views, attachments, and pursuits. The more we live and converse with them, the liker to them we become. There are some expressions in the scriptures that lead us to believe that the same thing will take place in heaven. The effect of our union with Christ will be a growing conformity to the divine likeness. Hence the apostle Paul assures us, "That we shall be changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of our God." John has the same idea, when he says: "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." As the ages of eternity pass over our heads, we shall be growing in our resemblance to the beauty, and temper, and holiness of the Redeemer. We shall be filled with all the fulness of God. Pleasures will be felt by the soul, too exquisite for mortal taste; happiness will be enjoyed, which none but those who are in heaven can describe. Resulting also from this union and likeness to God, is that communion to be enjoyed, when

when we shall see our Saviour's face. The people of God, even in this world, are honoured with seasons of comfortable communion with him; but 'God,' to use the words of an eminent divine, 'has reserves of glory, of love, and communion for a future state.' While we live in cottages of clay, we are unfit for the nearest and happiest communion with God.

We may taste of some of the distant streams that make glad the city of the Lord; but how enlarged our communion, and how heightened our happiness, when we are allowed to drink at the fountain of life; at those rivers of pleasures which are at God's right hand. Nothing there shall interrupt or mar your intercourse with the Father of mercies, and the God of consolations. There will be no unsuitableness in your souls for holding fellowship with God. Your affections, all purified and refined; your understandings improved and strengthened; your tempers, perfectly moulded into an exact conformity to your Redeemer's, will prepare you for this heavenly exercise. You may, without restraint, for ever solace yourselves in the embraces of divine love. To use the expressive language of the great Howe, 'You can touch nothing that can defile, and you can defile nothing you can touch.' God will not now cover himself with thick darkness; he will draw no veil over his dispensations; he will not hide his face from his people. There is no veil in the upper temple to intercept your views of the glories of the mercy-seat. There is no part of the holy of holies into which you may not enter. All that was wisely concealed from you in a state of pilgrimage shall be fully revealed, to excite your wonder and praise. "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." God, in order that the communion of glorified saints may be perfect, shall disclose every secret of his grace, and of his providence; and they shall have no reserves in their love to him.

In the last place, when the children of God see their Saviour's face, they shall enjoy complete satisfaction.

What is it in this world that affords solid satisfaction to the mind of the serious Christian? Is it not to see the works of the devil destroyed; to see the counsels of heaven effectual and successful; to see the kingdom of Christ extended; to see the triumphs of his grace daily multiplied; to see sin losing ground in the world, and the interests of truth prevailing; to see the authority of Christ acknowledged, and his glory filling the earth. These are sources of real satisfaction at present to his servants. But how often are they called to witness the reverse; and how often are their hopes and joys damped. But when they shall see their Saviour face to face, how will they be satisfied to see the end and glory of his wisdom, power, and mercy. It is then they shall see death destroyed, all his power over the chambers of the grave swallowed up in victory; it is then they shall see the dead come forth at the call of him who is the resurrection and the life; it is then they shall see the ransomed of the Lord coming to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads. Do the angels express their joy and satisfaction at the conversion of one sinner to God; what satisfaction shall not you feel when you shall see millions of sons conducted into glory; when you shall enter into the heavenly world with a multitude, which no man can number. Are you now satisfied when you see the interests of his kingdom established in the world; what heartfelt satisfaction awaits you, when you shall see his kingdom of glory begun; when you shall see all his mediatorial plans fully executed; when you shall see the grand and glorious ends to which all his works of providence and grace tended, fully displayed before your eyes. This will be a survey that will inspire the breast with holy, divine satisfaction. For ages has he been carrying on his designs in our world; but when his wisdom,

dom, and love, and power, are fully discovered in the issue and winding up of the whole, how shall we be at a loss to express our satisfaction and joy? When Christ shall be seen to triumph over all his enemies—over sin, the grave, death and hell; when he shall stand at the head of a redeemed world, “glorified in his saints, and admired of all them that believe;” what hallelujahs shall resound in the temple of heaven; what satisfaction shall beat from heart to heart throughout the redeemed kingdom of Christ! Looking forward to the jubilee of heaven; to the finishing of all God’s works, the Psalmist says, “As for me, “I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be “satisfied when I awake (in the morning of the resurrection) with thy likeness.”

I shall conclude this head of discourse with the striking language of the elegant Stennet. (Page 496, vol. 2.) In heaven, you shall be satisfied, “For there shall be no painful division of the heart between God and the creature; no hankering of the mind after inferior bliss; no vacuity in the soul; no wish denied; no expectation disappointed. O happy spirits! They are ever contemplating the chief good, yet never wearied with their contemplations. They love, and they rest in their love. They possess a fulness of joy, and yet are not satiated with their joys. Blessed satisfaction indeed! This must be the highest felicity to which a creature can attain; the utmost perfection of human nature; **GOD BEING ALL AND IN ALL.**”

I shall now improve this subject, by making some practical observations.

1. If our hopes are so high and honourable, it becomes us surely to walk worthy of the vocation whereby we are called. Vain are our pretensions, fruitless our prospects, if they excite us not to a preparation becoming the gospel; becoming the greatness and extent of the hope set before us. If we expect

to see our Saviour's face in the world to come, we will be anxious, during our abode on earth, to support the dignity of his government; to maintain the purity of his laws; to extend and promote his influence among men; to obey him ourselves without reserve; and to fear nothing beyond and beside his displeasure. Our alliance and connection with him is indeed endearing; but this should remind us to seek his face continually by approaches to him in contemplation and prayer; in his word, and in his ordinances. If we have no taste for these devotional exercises here, in vain shall we hope to see his face hereafter. This holy correspondence must commence on earth by a similitude of nature and of character. For if we are not now influenced by an affecting and practical knowledge of his nature (it is easy to have a speculative one); if we do not often represent him as a Creator, a Redeemer, the searcher of hearts, an inspector of human conduct; as a pattern, a lawgiver, and a judge; if we do not in this manner think of him in the private hours of devotion; and from thence bring such sentiments and feelings, as will make us stand in awe and be still, when engaged in the business of life; if we have no desire to acquaint ourselves with him, and become partakers of a divine nature: we shall not at last see his face; we shall not enjoy the permanent pleasures that result from the sacred intimacy, and refined intercourse on which the text fixes our attention. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness?" Let no portion of our time then pass away barren of improvement. Let our more vacant moments at least be filled with frequent anticipations of that happiness in reserve. When no mortal eye can see us; when withdrawn from the world, let our thoughts rise to God; let our knees be no strangers to a throne of grace. Let our voice be familiar to the footstool of his mercy. Let us draw near to him, and he will draw near to us, and shew himself

himself to be a God that is at hand, and not a God afar off.

2. The train of thinking into which this subject leads us, is fitted to check our intemperate pursuits after the honours, riches, or pleasures of this life. Did we daily and habitually realize those objects on which our holy religion fixes our attention (I say, *did we daily and habitually*, for that is the only method to be sensible of their influence) our restless stir and commotion about the perishing and fluctuating objects which this world profers, should be regulated with due propriety. That city to which we are now travelling; that society to which we shall ere long be joined; that eminence and dignity to which we shall be raised; that glory which shall encircle us; that happiness which we shall enjoy in the presence of our Saviour, should throw, what may be called, an useful and improving insignificance around every object of ambition on earth. Did Christians more frequently consider themselves as heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, they would seldomer mingle with the pollutions of life; they would seldomer be conformed to the spirit of the world that lieth in wickedness; they would seldomer fix their eyes on beholding vanity.

3. Such views as we have taken of our future felicity, furnish us with a precious cordial in the time of afflictions. This world is often a land of sorrows to the serious mind. It is not designed to be our home; and therefore, it has not all the accommodations of a lasting habitation. Either sickness, or sorrow, or anguish, or pain, or death encompass and distress us. We are often delivered over from anxiety to anxiety; tossed and disquieted, while we maintain our intercourse with the world; but when we quit it, and retire to see our Saviour's face, all these storms are immediately laid, and there succeeds a perfect calm. The language of religion and of the text is, "Be steadfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work

“work of the Lord, for as much as your labour shall
 “not be in vain.—He that overcometh will I grant
 “to sit down with me in my throne, even as I overcame,
 “and am set down with my Father in his throne.—
 “Continue faithful unto the death, and I will give
 “you a crown of life.” These are the substantial
 promises of the gospel, and wherever they are enter-
 tained, they impart substantial consolation. These
 are the promises; and we have laid before you the
 hopes that have often rendered easy the chains and
 fetters of the prison; that have cheered the pit and
 the dungeon, and sustained and fortified the mind in
 its passage through the valley and shadow of death.
 And this suggests,

4. Another use we ought to make of this subject.
 The hope of seeing our Saviour is calculated to
 disarm death of its terrors. In the calm and delibe-
 rate estimate which every Christian makes between the
 pleasures of a present and a future world, he finds
 the balance hang fairly in favour of the latter. Having
 a desire to depart and to be with Christ, he finds to
 be far better. This thought inspires him with for-
 titude, and strips death of its terrors; it vanquishes
 all slavish dread, and removes all despondency of
 mind. Under the divine influence of seeing his
 Saviour’s face, the Christian reasons thus with himself:
 ‘Did my Saviour descend from heaven for me?
 ‘Did he come down from the height of celestial
 ‘glory; and shall I be unwilling to ascend from earth
 ‘to heaven—from the depths of wretchedness, to the
 ‘summit of perfect bliss? Shall I be reluctant to
 ‘enter into his presence, where there is fulness of joy
 ‘and pleasures forever more? Can I feel pain to lay aside
 ‘corruption, and mortality with all its imperfections,
 ‘and to be clothed with immortality with all its beauties.
 ‘Animated by such views, shall I not long for and be
 ‘glad in my dissolution; and consider it only as
 ‘breaking down of that partition which stands between
 ‘me and my Saviour; when my soul shall, unincum-
 ‘bered, exert with freedom all its faculties and powers

in loving, and obeying him, who has been hitherto the supreme object of my desires, hopes and endeavours. Soon, therefore may the pleasant language of Jesus be sounded in my ears: *Surely I come quickly.* My grateful soul shall return the response, *Amen, even so come Lord Jesus.*

5. From the view we have taken, we may infer the worth and excellence of the soul as redeemed by Christ. Every part of the dispensation of grace shews the value of our souls—how important they are in the sight of God. Rather than they should be lost, Heaven travels with concern for ages; Christ is manifested in the flesh, he suffers, he bleeds, he dies, to redeem them. When we think on the costly price which purchased them, on the influences of divine grace which sanctifies them: well may we say they are worth ten thousand worlds. The happiness prepared for them in another world; the capacities and powers with which they shall be endowed to see the glory of their God and Saviour; to hold communion and fellowship with the infinite and eternal Jehovah; place their dignity and excellence in a point of view, that should never be lost sight of by the real Christian. The whole plan of redemption is designed to remind us of, and to bring us back to our original glory; to connect us with the Father of our spirits. Wilt thou forget the intentions of heaven, O sinner! and allow your soul, which is of such infinite worth, to grovel on earth? Wilt thou aim no higher than the pleasures of sense? Wilt thou for ever be a stranger to the hopes and desires of heaven? Think on the multitude of spirits once equally fallen and guilty with you, who are now beholding the face of Jesus; who are now ravished with the brightness of the excellent glory; who are now happy beyond conception in the presence, in the knowledge, and favour of God: Hast thou no desire ever to behold the unveiled face of God? Hast thou no desire for union, love-likeness, and satisfaction with him, who was dead, and is alive, and liveth for ever

ever more?—Think of the honour prepared for you in glory, and put a proper value on your souls.

In the 6th and last place, Hence we may learn the final issue of divine love; and our obligations to thank him for his unspeakable mercies. The love of God, to miserable, perishing creatures, terminates in the possession of eternal life. God would have been kind and merciful beyond our deserts, had he prolonged our existence, even in the world we inhabit. But how great his mercy and love, when he opens the gates of paradise for our admission, and invites us to see all his glory. That we should be allowed to converse with angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, is an honour to which we durst never aspire; but how astonishing his grace, which fits us for converse with himself? We need not wonder that angels are admitted to stand so near his throne; but well may we be struck with surprise to see creatures, once rebellious, apostate, and determined enemies, encouraged to approach his glorious majesty, and to mingle accents of praise with theirs. Might not provisions and blessings, purchased at a cheaper rate, been prepared for their entertainment? No; divine love is laid out to the full to make them happy; they must be redeemed with the precious blood of Christ; they must be entertained with the fulness of the divine glory. “How great is thy goodness which thou, O Lord, hast laid up for them that fear thee. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness to the children of men! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

SERMON XX.

GENESIS, xlviii. 21. *

Behold, I die ; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

THESE words are part of the address of good old Jacob to his dearly beloved Joseph, at the close of a life, no less remarkable for its vicissitudes, than eminent for its piety and devotion. This ancient patriarch had experienced a variety of changes, in his pilgrimage state. The cloud of adversity sat deep on his hoary head, when he wept over the fragments of the many coloured, bloody coat of his son Joseph. With all the feelings of the most tender-hearted parent, he had long bewailed the heavy and afflictive loss ; but a ray of bright consolation shone on the peaceful evening of his days. His well beloved son was restored to his embraces. In the land of Egypt he sheltered his aged head under his princely robe ; and cherished his dear parent, when labouring under the infirmities of extreme old age. — The

* Preached at Ochiltree, 31 July, 1791, on the Death of the Rev. Mr. Grant, Minister of that Parish.

time appointed for Jacob's departure at last draws nigh; he calls, in the first place, his son Joseph, and confers on him, and on his tender offspring, a variety of important blessings; to which he subjoins, in the words of our text: "Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers."

The last words of a dear parent, a faithful friend, or a godly minister, are long remembered; they are calculated to make deep, and permanent impressions on the reflecting mind. When the hand of death hath effected the solemn separation, we naturally call to remembrance the endearing conduct, the kindly admonitions, and the pious exhortations of our departed friends; more especially the words they uttered in the immediate prospect of their dissolution. We may well suppose, that Joseph, the darling son of his father, would long dwell, with pleasurable feelings, on the words of our text, expressed by the good old patriarch in the most solemn manner; and containing a very comfortable promise, to be fulfilled after his body was laid in the dust—a promise which was happily accomplished in the future deliverance of his descendants from Egyptian bondage, and in their secure possession of the land of Canaan. For God is faithful who hath promised, and he will perform. Though for wise ends he may see meet to remove, by death, his eminent and useful servants, yet he will not remove his presence from his people; he will continue to bless them, and shall at last bring them to the land promised in the New Covenant—that better country, where death, and sin, and sorrow, shall be known no more. "Behold, I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers."

On the recent and afflictive loss you have sustained by the death of your late worthy and valuable Pastor, these words have occurred to my mind, as affording

a subject not unsuitable to the present melancholy occasion. They may be divided into the two following general sentiments:

In the first place, That death, by a good man is contemplated with satisfaction, and even with delight.

And, Secondly, that though God be pleased to remove his eminent servants by death, yet his people shall not be deprived of the divine presence; he shall still be with them, and bring them at last to the heavenly Canaan.

After having illustrated these two general propositions, I shall conclude with an improvement suited to the present occasion.

In the first place, death is an object contemplated by a good man with satisfaction, and even with delight. This sentiment is evidently implied in the words of Jacob—*Behold, I die; I am now drawing near the concluding period of my existence on earth; and I trust in the God of my fathers, who is my God; that he will conduct me with safety through the dark valley, and shadow of death. My life has been chequered with a variety of the most interesting events; and now I resign myself, and my all into the hands of a gracious God, who hath redeemed me from all evil.* Perhaps this celebrated servant of God would have found it difficult, in any former period of his life, to have expressed himself with equal confidence. For, we see how he fled with precipitation from Laban; how he trembled at the prospect of meeting with his brother Esau; and how he lamented, as one who had lost his all, when he beheld the blood-stained garment of his son Joseph; and had almost sunk into a state of absolute despondency. But now, when the great last trial approaches, he views it with composure; he talks of it as an event, to which he had long familiarized his mind; and he yields himself into the hands of his heavenly Father, and redeeming God.

But

But such is the weakness of human nature, in its present state; such our consciousness of guilt; and so great the influence of sensible objects; that the best of men cannot always adopt the language of firmness and satisfaction on this subject. Death is regarded by mortals as the king of terrors. We are fond of arraying this all-destroying monarch in the most sable and gloomy attire. We give him a crown and a sceptre, more awful far than ever was worn or wielded by any terrestrial monarch. Nature, appalled, recoils at his appearance. The chilling thoughts of dissolution instantly spread a trembling over our feeble frame; and, when we cannot conquer, we resign ourselves to melancholy despondency. The cold hand of death, my friends, shall soon seize our bodies; in their past occasional disorders, we have already felt something of his painful touch, warning us of his approach, and paving the way for his ultimate and entire conquest. But what is death in a natural sense? It is a mere phantom, like the vain images which midnight darkness is apt to raise in the troubled mind. The moment he gives the fatal blow, we feel no more. The pale, the lifeless body is now insensible to pain, and the soul to every imaginary terror. Why then tremble at the thoughts of death? Why mar the sweet enjoyments of human life by dwelling upon it, as we know that all the pain and anguish occasioned by our dissolution are transient and momentary? The grave is a secure shelter from every stormy blast; where "the wicked cease from troubling, and where "the weary be at rest."

But if the pain of dying be thus transient and momentary, the anxious and distressing question recurs: Why then are men afraid of death? A question to which the voice of nature could never give a satisfactory answer. Revelation, the sole, unerring standard of sacred truth, unfolds the real cause, from whence arise in the human mind the fears of death. As subjects of a divine, moral government which embraces

embraces a larger extent than the narrow bounds of time, we are connected with the great Judge of all by a more intimate and sublime union than the beasts around us. To our view revelation opens up an astonishing scene beyond death and the grave, where our souls are to exist after their departure from their bodies; and where we shall feel our connection with God infinitely stronger than we can possibly do in this world. Nothing can be more certain than that we all are sinners; it is this truth that renders death alarming. This is the principal cause of our dreadful apprehensions concerning an awful *hereafter*. That other world is with great propriety called, "the unknown country;" where the mode of our existence, the manner of our perceptions, and the nature of our feelings, so remote from the objects of sense, cannot at present be understood by the limited powers of the human mind. But in that other world, we are expressly told, that they who, in this life, have offended God, shall be punished with everlasting destruction. And have we not all offended God? Do we not all deserve his just indignation? It is his wrath that invests Death with all his terrors. It is a consciousness of guilt that gives him his poisonous sting; and that sting is but feebly felt by the expiring body, in comparison with what the soul must feel in its awful separation. It is the law of God we have transgressed, that gives strength to sin; and it is sin that gives Death his envenomed arrows, which shall transfix the guilty, the wretched soul, through eternal ages.

But while revelation, congenial to the anticipations of nature, gives us, as fallen and guilty creatures, just views of a separate state of existence; it unfolds, at the same time, doctrines and scenes replete with the greatest comfort to the believing mind. By the law of God is the knowledge of sin; and from a consciousness of transgression we dread eternal misery. But by the gospel, life and immortality are brought to light. When this gospel produces its saving and

happy

happy effects on the heart, death is contemplated, no more as an object of horror and dismay, but as that friendly messenger which calls the weary traveller home to his father's house. When the happy effects of the gospel are felt, the transported soul in contemplating its final departure, may adopt the language of the holy apostle: "O death! where is now thy sting; O grave! where now thy victory? The sting of death is sin; the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory through my Lord, Jesus Christ." *Behold, I die*; but it is to live for ever in a happier world. When such language is employed, certain deliverance is obtained from that condemnatory sentence of the divine law, which gives strength to sin; death is divested of his frightful appearance; and the gloomy valley converted into a safe passage to the blissful regions of light and liberty. Let us enlarge a little on these delightful sentiments.

1. The believer can now contemplate death with satisfaction and delight, because he is delivered from the condemnatory sentence of the divine law. Sin hath now lost its power, for the law has acquitted the guilty. The pardon of sin lies at the foundation of solid peace and satisfaction. The Lord of glory hath died to obtain this pardon; for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." He hath satisfied all the just and equitable claims of the divine law. Having paid the debt in the generous character of our surety, he now sets the prisoners at liberty. Death is to be considered as the executioner of the sentence of the law of God; but reverse the sentence, and this sable officer is stript of his gloomy attire. Lead forth a condemned criminal to the place of execution. Attend him to the last scene, where the law is to enforce its full demands. See the trembling creature contemplating the dread apparatus with silent horror. To him the executioner is an object of overwhelming dismay. The moment

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is arrived when he must feel the fatal blow; but at that moment let him hear the glad tidings of pardon; that his sovereign, in the plenitude of his mercy, hath reversed his doom, and delivered him from the power of death. Does he now contemplate the dread apparatus, and the ghastly executioner with horror? No, surely; these very objects heighten his joy, and raise inexpressible transports. But all this is only a shadow of the felicity, which they enjoy who are delivered from the sentence of the divine law. And O! with what affection does the grateful soul now turn to its Almighty and generous Saviour, when he speaks in language the most endearing to the trembling heart: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee!" He hath died for us, and in dying he divested the awful executioner of his fable array. Justified by his righteousness, we now have peace with God. Interested in his salvation, all his people may contemplate death with composure and delight.

2. The believer can now contemplate death with satisfaction and delight, because the power of sin in his soul is destroyed. The despotic reign of unmortified desires and passions is no more. He is not under the condemnatory sentence, but under grace. "As sin formerly reigned in his mortal body unto death; so grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by our Lord Jesus Christ." Washed from his sins in the laver of regeneration, he is conformed to the image of the Son of God. The filthy rags of moral corruption, and depravity, are now exchanged for the unsullied garments of holiness. We are assured that Jesus died, in order that the Holy Spirit might be sent into the world, by whose operations sinners are purified from defilement, and rendered like unto God. The conscience that formerly condemned is now purged from dead works. Dying to sin, and living daily to righteousness, the happy soul now advances in its journey to the heavenly world. Many things may obstruct its progress, but the

the same Spirit that began will carry on the sovereign work of grace till it be perfected. Abounding in the virtues and duties of the Christian life, and having the Spirit witnessing with his spirit that he is born from above: say now, can the good man regard death as an object of terror? It is sin that points the sting of death; but remove the cause, and the effect ceaseth for ever. Death has no power to wound the soul that is arrayed in the garments of holiness. If we be united to Jesus, as our living and glorious head, by a conformity to his image; we shall triumph over death as he triumphed. It was impossible that the bonds of death could hold him, because he was the Holy One of God; it is equally impossible for death to triumph over any of his members. The sanctified of the Lord shall pass unhurt through its gloomy territories, and shall smile at the shaking of the tyrant's dart, now broken in pieces by the omnipotence of Jesus, and his glorious victory.

3. The believer can contemplate death with satisfaction and delight, because he is an adopted son of God, and heir to that fair inheritance which, beyond the confines of death, lies far remote from the regions of sin and sorrow. If we be the children of God, then we are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ of eternal glory. Death, with all its power, is not able to deprive the sons of the Most High of this goodly heritage; for God, who cannot lie, hath promised eternal life to all the friends and family of Jesus. Their elder brother has gone before them, and taken possession of that celestial country for all who follow after him. And, "because he lives, they shall live" also—I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Impressed with such sentiments as these, the beloved disciple exclaims: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" But this love is not limited to our adoption into his family; it follows out

out, and completes the glorious plan; for it is immediately added: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Where now is death with his boasted power? Where the triumph of the grave, when the children of God can now rejoice in the certain possession of this glorious vision of their exalted Saviour? Heaven is a purchased inheritance; and if you are among the children of God, "Death is yours," to introduce you at last to the full enjoyment of all its blessings. With what satisfaction and delight may you not, therefore, contemplate his approach; with infinitely greater joy, than the heir of the richest earthly inheritance welcomes the messenger that brings him the tidings of his succession, and the accomplishment of his ardent desires.

In the last place, the believer can contemplate death with satisfaction and delight, because he is enabled, in the exercise of faith, to rejoice in the hope of meeting with his God, and Father, and friend in that other world; and of enjoying the full vision of his face for ever. Give a man to feel the principle of hope founded on sure and stable grounds; and what evils will he not surmount; what dangers encounter; and what enemies combat? 'Give me,' may the Christian say, 'Give me to rejoice in the high hope of felicity in a future world—of resting there in the bosom of my Father, and my God, after all the toils of my pilgrimage; and I welcome with cheerfulness the last messenger. I stretch out my hands to embrace him. Sweet friend! I hail thy approach; thy hand is cold indeed, but the heart of my deliverer is warm, and his affection sincere.' Is there an object on earth to be envied? it is the child of God laid on the bed of death; rejoicing in the hope of mingling with angels, and with the ransomed in glory. The bed of death is the good man's shining scene

scene; for this he lived a life of piety and devotion; of prayer and benevolence; for this he laboured, and fought, and watched, and abounded in every duty. He now adores the riches of sovereign grace and mercy, manifested to him through the Redeemer, which kept him from falling, and preserved him, through faith, to the last concluding moment. Resting on the infinitely valuable sacrifice of his Saviour, and pleading his righteousness for acceptance, he closes the scene of mortality; he falls asleep in Jesus, in the assured hope of a glorious resurrection, when his body, now consigned to corruption, shall be raised up at the last day, and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. Well then may the people of God unite, in that admirable song of praise and thanksgiving: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

Thus we see how a good man can die—with what delight and composure he contemplates his departure from this present state. In the exercise of faith, and of humble and holy confidence, he places his sole dependence on Jesus, who shed his precious blood to deliver him from the sentence of condemnation; who hath opened up a way for the Holy Spirit to come into this world, in order to renew, and sanctify, and make meet for glory; who sends down this Spirit into the hearts of his people, "whereby they cry, Abba, Father," as the children of God, and heirs of eternal life; and who gives them, by his resurrection, to rejoice in the hope of being raised up at the great Day, when "he shall come the second time, without sin, unto salvation." And thus the gospel exhibits to our view doctrines, the most powerful

and exhilarating under all the evils of life, and every way calculated to yield consolations against the fears of death. It requires, indeed, an animated and vigorous faith to overcome the reluctances of nature, in the near prospect of dying; we are fond of life; and this, in moderation, is a feeling wisely interwoven with our original frame. With the best, it is often a struggle, when these two intimate companions, the soul and the body, must part. But what has not faith done? A firm and steady belief in the great doctrines of the gospel, and a living hope of a happy immortality smooth the wrinkled brow of affliction, and convert the frown of death into a pleasing smile. Many indeed are the causes that weaken the operation of faith, and hope, and joy in the minds of God's children; and it has frequently happened that not a few of them have died seemingly without any sensible consolation. But still, "the foundation stands sure: the Lord knoweth them that are his.—Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Thus we think, and speak with comfort concerning our dear friends who have fallen asleep in Jesus. We pay the last mournful tribute of respect to their bodies, by attending their funeral; we deposit them in the dust, as a sacred treasure; and from the mouldering grave we return to the empty house with weeping eyes and with sorrowing hearts. But for them we can no longer sorrow and grieve. They are not now the objects of our sympathy; they are far beyond the regions of pain, sickness, and death. It is for ourselves we mourn; we look around us to the world, and imagine all is desolate—a dreary wilderness. We have perhaps lost our greatest earthly support; a tender-hearted friend; a dear relative; a kind brother; or an affectionate and godly minister. The stroke is heavy; but if we be followers of those who through faith and patience do now inherit the promises, we have the comfortable assurance, that though we are deprived of their presence, we are not deprived of the presence

presence of God ; for he ever lives to bless his people, amidst all the afflictions, vicissitudes, and losses in human life. With this delightful sentiment the good old patriarch in our text consoled his dearly beloved son, when he bade him a solemn adieu : “ Behold I “ die, but the Lord shall be with you, and bring you “ again unto the land of your fathers.” And this leads us to the

Second branch of our subject, which was to shew : That though God be pleased to remove his eminent servants by death, he will not take his gracious presence from his people ; he shall still be with them, and bring them at last to the possession of the heavenly inheritance.

In the near prospect of Jacob’s death, Joseph and his brethren would no doubt indulge melancholy reflections on their approaching loss, and alarming situation. They were strangers in a strange land ; exposed to the caprice and jealousy of an arbitrary monarch, who might treat them with severity. While the venerable patriarch was alive, they looked up to him for his council and protection. They knew that he was a good man, and a favourite of heaven ; and that for his sake they had been blessed with signal expressions of kindness from the Egyptians. But when death had deprived them of his presence, they were justly apprehensive, lest the court of Pharaoh might withdraw its wonted benevolence, and deal cruelly with them. To console their drooping minds under these fearful apprehensions, the dying saint assures them, that “ God should be with them, and bring “ them again unto the land of their fathers.” This assurance, you see, consists of two parts, which we shall shortly consider.

1. “ God shall be with you.” The divine presence is not suspended on the life of any of his faithful servants. Though he removes them by death, yet he will continue to guide, and support, and defend his people.

He will "guide" them by his counsel. In seasons of distress, in circumstances of doubt and perplexity, we are apt to rest too much on the counsel and direction of weak and fallible men. We forget the salutary advice: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God." When involved in difficulties, the deprivation of a judicious, intelligent friend must penetrate our hearts with grief and sorrow. We are afraid that we shall wander from the right path, when bereaved of our guide and director. We have not yet learned to place a due confidence in the divine promises. When God, in his providence, deprives us of the presence of our earthly friends, he intends by such dispensations to direct our views solely to himself; to lead us to a constant dependence on his infinite wisdom; and to dispose us to hearken to his voice, which calls us to arise, and to come to him in every hour of doubt and perplexity. He will then guide us with his eye set upon us; he will conduct us in the ways of peace, and make all things work together for our good.

He will also "support" his people in every time of need. Our dependence on earthly friends, for sensible comfort is often great. Children look to the opening hand of their parents; domestics expect to receive daily supplies from their masters; and the people of God, in his ordinances, attend on the ministrations of the servants of Christ for that nourishment, which is necessary to refresh and support their souls. Conversant so much with sensible objects, we are apt to forget that all these are only instruments in the divine hand; that, in fact, daily bread for our bodies, and the bread of life for our souls, are the gifts of God, who openeth his hand liberally, and supplieth the wants of all his creatures. Do we not then understand the language of afflictive dispensations, by which we are deprived of sensible supports? Are we not taught by these our sole dependence on God himself; on his promises; his gracious presence; and the rich spiritual consolations of the gospel? When
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he says, "I will be with you," he assures us that he is our shepherd; that he will lead us into green pastures; that he will restore our souls, and comfort us with nourishment suited to every time of need. Again,

He will "defend" us in the midst of danger. When he promises that his presence shall be with us, we need not fear though the whole world should rise up against us. No arm of flesh can shield like his Almighty arm. This was David's buckler and defence. This was the rejoicing of his heart, when he could say: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident—for in the time of trouble, he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle he shall hide me; he shall set me on a rock." What would the presence of Jacob, of Moses, or of Joshua have availed the ancient Israelites, if the Lord had not been among them; they would have fallen an easy prey to their enemies. And when these eminent servants were removed from them, they were equally safe, as long as they enjoyed the presence of God; their guide, and guardian, and protector.

Think then on the grace and goodness, the value and extent of this comfortable promise: "I will be with you," to guide, to support, and defend you. Let this consideration console your distressed and sorrowing minds, under every afflictive dispensation of providence. To complete your felicity, you are called to extend your views to a better world than the present. The promise is not confined to your pilgrimage here below. It would have been small comfort to the Israelites, if, after they had been guided, and supported, and defended in the wilderness, they had stopped short at the banks of Jordan, and never entered into the promised land. But the last part of the promise is equally certain as the first.

2. "God shall bring you again unto the land of your fathers." The deprivation of sensible comfort;

the loss of dear friends; the death of the eminent servants of Christ; all combine to fix our attention on this promise; to impress our minds with a sense of its high value; and to teach us to live and act under the powers of the world to come. If the enjoyments of this present life were to smile continually upon us; if external comforts were to flow with an uniform, unabating stream; if domestic scenes were always brightened with the sunshine of prosperity; and if the ministers of Christ, were to abide constantly with us; we would forget our interest in that better world; we would be apt to say with Peter: "It is good for us to be here." But when the clouds of adversity darken the prospect; when we are called to mourn the heavy loss of a bosom friend, or of a faithful pastor; when we drop the sorrowing tear over their remains; we then look, and long for that happy land, where there is no sin, or affliction; where no loss shall ever bedew our eyes; where we shall not stand in need of these external comforts for our felicity, and consequently shall feel no pain from the dread of losing them. In this view, is not the promise full of the richest comfort, "and I will bring you again unto the land of your fathers?" Does not this animate you when ready to faint by the way; does not this cheer your spirits when depressed with difficulties; does not this inspire you with fortitude to go on through the wilderness, and to persevere in the path that leads to eternal glory?

You shall be brought at last to the promised land. In a little you shall come to the end of your journey. And when you step into the waters of Jordan; and bid an everlasting adieu to all the scenes of mortality, you shall then feel the peculiar sweetness of the promise. This shall be your rod and staff to comfort and support you at the hour of death; this will carry you through the dark valley, and will give you to triumph in your last moments: "O death! Where is thy sting? O grave! Where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory." Then you shall

shall know the full extent of the divine assurance :
 “ My presence shall go with you, and I will give you
 “ rest.” You shall enter into those mansions of bliss,
 which Jesus is preparing for all his followers. You
 shall cease from all your labours; you shall see the
 good land; you shall eat of the tree of life, and drink
 deep of these pure and copious streams of unmingled
 felicity, that flow from the throne of God and of the
 Lamb. While, therefore, you are taught, by afflictive
 events, that here you have no continuing city, are you
 not looking for one that is to come—a city that hath
 foundations, whose builder and maker is God; confess-
 ing yourselves pilgrims and strangers on earth, and un-
 remitting in your preparations for the heavenly Canaan,
 where you shall forever rest in the favour and love of
 God; who hath guided you by his counsel; who hath
 supported you by his grace; and protected you by his
 Almighty power from all your foes: for there remain-
 eth a rest for the people of God, which he shall confer
 on all his faithful servants?

And have we not good reason to hope, that your late
 worthy pastor now enjoys the fulfilment of this pro-
 mise in all its extent—that God hath brought him to
 the land of eternal rest? After his labours in the vine-
 yard, we trust that he hath now entered into his master’s
 joy; and that instead of meeting with you, this day, as
 he once hoped—at a communion table here below*, he
 is now associated with the ransomed in glory, at a table of
 unmingled joys, in the sanctuary above. I know not,
 my brethren, if I shall be able to dwell long on this part
 of my subject. I wish to be short; but the intimate
 friendship that subsisted between him and me; the
 respect I have for his memory; and the great regard,
 which many, if not the whole of this congregation
 bore to him; with other peculiar circumstances;
 would induce me to say more than my feelings
 will permit me.

* The Lord’s Supper was intimated to be dispensed at Ochiltree
 on the day this Sermon was preached.

In his public character, as a minister and servant of Jesus Christ, we may, in truth, say, he was "a burning and shining light." God had conferred upon him distinguished talents, which he, with willingness and alacrity, employed in the service of his master, for the divine glory, and the salvation of the souls of men. He was well acquainted with the sacred writings; with those precious truths which the Spirit of God has revealed, as pointing out the only way to Jesus Christ. His discourses were vigorous and animated; shewing at once, that he was no stranger to the human heart, and that he knew how to adapt himself to the various cases of his hearers. Anxious for the glory and honour of the Christian cause, he taught you how to unite principle with practice; enforcing the duties of a religious character, by arguments deduced from the love of God, and the Saviour. He excelled in dwelling on a sentiment, by representing it in various views, on purpose that the slowest hearer might understand and feel its energy and importance. You, of this congregation, have had a proof of his ministry, and can testify that he was a workman who needed not to be ashamed.

God, in his adorable providence, whose dispensations are dark and intricate to our apprehensions, saw meet to shorten his life among you, and to call him away in the midst of his days, and almost at the commencement of his pastoral labours in this congregation. Five years have not yet elapsed, since I had the happiness of giving him a charge respecting your souls; and of addressing myself to you on that pleasing occasion *. That charge he hath amply fulfilled according to the grace given unto him, and he is now gone to give his account before a higher tribunal than any on earth: and, as to himself we believe he has given his solemn account with joy.

You all know that he did not espouse the cause of religion with indifference; you will unite with me in

* The Author of the above Sermon presided, and preached at his admission to his charge at Ochiltree, on the 14, of December 1786.

saying that his zeal was ardent, and his attachment to the truth unshaken and invariable. His affections were warm; he felt the power of religious principle strong in his own heart, and he wished every person might feel it also. He was the most candid and honest I ever had the happiness to know. He was swayed by no sinister motive; free from the spirit of party; he spoke what he thought, without the fear or dread of human censure. With manly, with Christian fortitude he rose superior to the reproaches of an unbelieving world. Perhaps few, in this age, endured more of these reproaches than he did; but from my intimate acquaintance with him, I can justly say, that perhaps no person felt them so little. On his brave mind they rested not for a moment. To this part of his character may, in some measure, be applied what a noble lord said, when our great reformer, John Knox, was laid in the dust. "Here," he exclaimed, "are deposited the remains of a servant of Christ, who never feared the face of man."

Need I enlarge on the affection to you which he discovered in other branches of his ministerial labours? You are witnesses, and God also, with what solicitude and concern he sought the salvation of every soul committed to his charge. Instant in season, and out of season; going about from house to house, instructing and teaching the doctrines of the kingdom. You all know with what energy in private, as well as in public, he wished to carry home conviction to every heart. The indisposition of his body, under which he more or less laboured, ever since he came among us, unfitted him at times for the full discharge of his ministerial duties. But I have reason to believe that he often did more than his strength could well permit. The very last time he stood in this place was an exertion that accelerated the progress of his complaints. During his last illness he expressed a peculiar concern for you. He was resigned to the will of God, and if he had a wish to live, it was for you—that he might still spend and be spent

in the work of the gospel. For some considerable time he entertained hopes of recovery ; but his disease baffled all the power of medicine. With seemingly little pain he fell asleep, and is now gone to a happier world. " Mark the perfect man, and behold the " upright, for the latter end of that man is peace."

By this severe dispensation God is speaking in very loud language to every one of this congregation. He, who ministered to you in holy things, taught you how to live ; and by his death a most powerful lesson is afforded you how to die. The words he spoke to you, as they were the words of eternal life, shall not be lost. Against the finally impenitent the gospel he preached will be an awful witness at the last day. On this solemn occasion, I charge every one of you, as you value your precious souls, not to meet him at that day, but on the right hand of the approving Judge. Many of you I hope will long remember his discourses ; for though he be dead, yet he still speaks to you. With what affection and transport shall he meet with such of you as belong to Jesus—with heart-felt joy presenting you to his master, saying : " Behold here am I, and the children thou gavest me." It will indeed be a happy day, when you shall be brought to the land of eternal rest that remains for the people of God. He hath entered into the joy of his Lord ; follow after him as far as he followed Christ ; and account in this view his pattern, as well as his precept, worthy your constant and daily regard. On his heart we may well suppose he bore your best interests in his last illness ; and if, in the concluding moments of his existence on earth, he had been favoured with recollection and the power of utterance, we doubt not but he would have expressed himself, with respect to those among you who fear the Lord, in the words of our text—" Behold, I die ; but God shall be with you, " and bring you again into the land promised to the " fathers."

Improve the subject of this day's discourse in the
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certain prospect of your own departure from this transitory scene of things. You have seen how a child of God can welcome death with satisfaction and delight. Though this be an event awful and alarming to nature; though there be something in it the most solemn and impressive that can engage the human mind; yet to those who believe in Jesus death is most welcome. Deeply sensible of the just demerit of sin, and of the alarming threatenings of the divine law, you will seek to be delivered from the wrath that is to come; for unless you be reconciled to God, and justified through the obedience and righteousness of your Surety, you will never contemplate death with satisfaction and delight. In all the means of grace, and ordinances of divine appointment, let the sanctification of your souls be one capital object of your concern; for they who are assimilated unto the divine image shall triumph over death and every enemy. They shall see God as he is, and be like him in glory. While engaged in the common concerns of life, your thoughts will rise above the world, and you shall dwell with ardent desires on that everlasting inheritance reserved for the sons of God. In the blessed hope of a glorious resurrection through your Almighty Saviour, you will look and long for his second coming, when he shall appear, without sin, unto salvation.

From the latter part of the subject, you see the felicity of the redeemed of the Lord. Though God, in his providence, often mysterious in its dispensations, removes by death his eminent and useful servants, he will not take his presence from his people. If you belong to that happy number, he will be with you as your God to guide, to support and defend you, and shall at last bring you to the heavenly Canaan. Be intreated to walk worthy of such distinguished mercies. Beware of indulging yourselves in any known sin; for this alone can separate between God and your souls, and hide from you the smiles of his countenance. You may mourn the loss you sustain by the death

death of departed friends, but your God shall fully compensate every loss. "Fear not, for he is your shield, and exceeding great reward." Under a deep sense of the little improvement you have made of the means of grace, rather mourn for your remissness, indifference, and numerous backslidings; and earnestly pray that God would not in his anger deprive you of the bread of life, and of his Spirit in his ordinances. Intreat him to send you a pastor according to his own heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding; and be the happy mean, under the divine blessing, of saving many souls in this congregation.

As for those among you who have derived little or no benefit from the labours of your late pastor, you may regard the present dispensation as an awful judgement; and an awful judgement it certainly is, if you remain insensible to the voice of this providence! O! think how many prayers he offered up for you; how many exhortations he communicated; how many warnings he gave you! And can your hearts still remain hardened? May we not hope that they now feel the liveliest impressions of death and eternity, and of all the doctrines of the gospel you have heard. Let not these impressions be effaced by the returning cares of the world. Consider that death is fast approaching, and that "now is the accepted time; this is the day of salvation. Turn to your strongholds while prisoners of hope. Seek the Lord while he is to be found, and call upon him, while he is near;" so shall his presence go with you, and he shall at last give you rest with all his people in the happy land promised in the New Covenant.

"Now, unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever." Amen.